

Spring 2024

Volunteer Opportunities
Page 2

Nature Musings and Updates
Page 3

Winter Wrap Up
Page 4



The mission of Three Rivers Park District is to promote environmental stewardship through recreation and education in a natural resources-based park system.

The Distinguished Volunteer Service Award Program is designed to recognize outstanding volunteers and offer direct interaction between leading volunteers and the Board of Commissioners.

Volunteers are eligible to receive this award once. Selection is based on individual accomplishments, including the volunteer's overall contributions, training or teaching, efforts "beyond the call of duty," special initiatives, as well as their years and hours of service. Nominations may be made by any staff member, volunteer or the general public starting in December.

Each year up to six outstanding Park District volunteers are selected by The Distinguished Volunteer Service Award Selection Committee. This is composed of one volunteer, three Park District field staff members representing the different park locations and departments where volunteers work, the Volunteer Coordinator and a representative from the Marketing and Community Engagement team.

Congratulations
2024 Distinguished Volunteer Service Award Recipients!

Paul Arneson

Edina: Program Assistant-District Events, Outdoor Recreation School, Baker Outdoor Learning Center, Richardson Nature Center; Park Patrol-District Events, Hyland Park Reserve, Nine Mile Creek and Lake Minnetonka LRT Regional Trails

Michael Davis

Eden Prairie: Ski Patrol, Hyland Hills Ski Area

Charity Duran

Brooklyn Park: Program Assistant, Eastman Nature Center; Animal Care Assistant, Eastman Nature Center

Randy Hartnett

Champlin: Natural Resources Surveyor, Natural Resources; Program Assistant, Mississippi Gateway; Natural Resources Monitor, Mississippi Gateway; Park Patrol, Elm Creek, Mississippi Gateway, Rush Creek, Medicine Lake and Shingle Creek Regional Trails

Barclay Kruse

Coon Rapids: Program Assistant-Mississippi Gateway; Natural Resource Monitor-Mississippi Gateway; Park Ambassador-Mississippi Gateway; Project Assistant-Mississippi Gateway; Project Assistant-Research, District wide; Project Specialist-Photography, Marketing

Anthony Pini

Eden Prairie: Project Assistant-Seed Cleaning, District Nursery; Natural Resources Monitor-Bluebirds, Lowry Nature Center; Project Assistant-Prairie Seed Collection, District Wide; Leader-Seed Collection District Wide; Program Assistant, Lowry Nature Center; Project Assistant-Nursery, District Nursery; Project Assistant-Research District wide; Natural Resources Monitor, Natural Resources

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A special thank you to the DVSA committee for their help in selecting this year's recipients: Steven Hogg, Wildlife Supervisor; Tom Knisely, Media Relations Coordinator; Kent Holmes, past DVSA recipient; Mary Morris, Interpretive Naturalist; and Jane Thompson, Park Service Assistant; and Becca Conser, Volunteer Resources Coordinator.

Volunteer Opportunities

Please sign up by calling RNC 763-694-7676 or emailing RichardsonNC@ThreeRiversParks.org

Animal Trail:

Spring Scavenger Hunt

Saturday, March 30

9:00 a.m.–1:45 p.m. (program time is 10 a.m.–1 p.m.)

There's a camouflage/scavenger hunt as the main activity with a story stroll, games, crafts and live animals. We will need help with the following:

- Trail set-up prior to the participants arrival
- Explain directions to games and crafts
- Greeter
- Registration assistant
- Friendly face at the start/end of the camouflage trail
- Pass out prizes at various activities
- Show live animals
- Restock and refresh the coffee/tea bar that is for adult participants
- Clean up camouflage trail and other materials at the conclusion of the event.

If you have any questions about what we will need help with or anything else about this event, feel free to give us a call at 763-694-7676 or send an email.

Garden and Buckthorn Help

Spring is most certainly right around the corner and I am looking for volunteers that might be interested in working in our butterfly garden and wildlife viewing area as well as removing buckthorn in our areas encircling our building.

Last spring, a few of us started cleaning up the butterfly garden in the front entrance area. Our goals were to add to the diversity of butterfly host and pollinator plants, especially those essential for the Monarch butterfly. We'd love to see this area flourish and become a space where guests can experience the Monarch life cycle and tag them in the fall. Similarly, the native plantings around our Wildlife Viewing Area are in need of ongoing TLC. We need folks that are willing to help us clean the area this spring as well as those that are willing to put in ongoing work of weeding, watering and pruning plants that are overtaking the space. Onsite training is provided as well as tools and gloves!

We are also in need of folks that would like to be trained in ways to cut and treat buckthorn around our nature center. As many of you know, we will be losing a number of ash trees this April. Without this canopy, the underlying buckthorn will most certainly make a strong surge! This most certainly will be an ongoing effort.

Work in any of these areas can be done as a group or as individual efforts following initial instruction. If you are interested, please contact me at Sue.Mohn@ThreeRiversParks.org or RNC (see above contacts).

Look forward to hearing from you!
Sue

Free Family Fun Days

Sundays

March 3–4 p.m., April and May 1–3 p.m.

Every Sunday, naturalist staff will be providing visitors with a variety of outdoor activities and experiences with a different theme. Assist with greeting visitors or helping with an outdoor activity.

Spring Volunteer Fun!

Pie/Pi Day Hike

Thursday, March 14

5–6:30 p.m.

RNC staff and volunteers will join together with Outdoor Recreation School staff and volunteers for a casual gathering. We will chat, drink warm beverages, eat pie and take a short hike. Feel free to bring a dessert to share. Please let us know if you can join the fun!

Nature Musings: Is It Spring? Again?

By Pauline Bold, Naturalist

After last year's piles of snow and never-ending ice, this past winter was a breeze. Or, did we all fall into a deep slumber and sleep through winter to awaken in the spring?

Nope! The calendar flipped from a wet fall to a dry, arid winter. Temperatures soared into the 40s and 50s. Oh, there was a dusting of snow now and then. And Valentine's Day graced us with a half foot of snow, which the warming sun quickly started to melt it.

Now we will wait and see what Mother Nature has in store for "real" spring, I guess. Real spring will fill our senses with ROYGBIV—all the colors of the rainbow! Hopefully, some rain to feed the return to life of slumbering trees, buried bulbs, seeds that have laid dormant and hidden roots of perennial plants and grasses will poke their new shoots through the top of the soil.

Temperatures will rise higher but rivers maybe not so much this year. So, the threat of flooding may pass us by.

Birds will sing their spring love songs and baby animals will be born to entertain us with their cute antics.

The earth will renew itself as it always does when spring arrives. Time for all of us to start afresh and enjoy the beauty all around us.

Raptor Update



The raptor program at Richardson recently acquired a new education bird. A hatch-year male Great Horned Owl was admitted to The Raptor Center's veterinary clinic on May 12, 2023. He was their 190th patient since the start of the year. He was admitted with a compression fracture of the right leg (tarsometatarsus), which healed, as well as a traumatic injury to the left eye. Unfortunately, he had to undergo a surgery to remove the eye. As a result of the injury and the necessity of perfect vision for hunting, the veterinary staff determined him non-releasable and a candidate for placement. After our permit request was completed by the Minnesota DNR, he left The Raptor Center and arrived at Richardson Nature Center on December 1. He is housed in the far-right raptor enclosure on the second floor of the nature center. He has done outstanding getting accustomed to people, building confidence in this new role and learning all the skills to both live in captivity and be an "on the glove" education raptor.

Welcome Sheila!

Hello nature lovers! I am excited to join the team at Richardson Nature Center as a seasonal naturalist. I spent more than 15 years teaching environmental science and physics in a high school classroom. Most recently, I have been working with elementary students at Mississippi Park Connection and Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge. With my free time I enjoy all of Minnesota's seasons by hiking, swimming, cross country skiing or reading a good book by a blazing fire. I am looking forward to meeting you all!

Sheila Sullivan will be starting at RNC on April 15.



Winter? Fun! “Adapt” was key to programming this winter!

We had two nights of kicksledding programs this winter. The January program was a beautiful night on Muskrat Pond. It was lit up by lanterns around the pond. February kicksledding was almost cancelled but with the several inches of new snow we were able to kicksled on the ski trail. It was a cold night and the people that came had a great time!



What a beautiful day to celebrate our 26th Annual Ice Harvest Day! We had a top-notch crew that welcomed around 270 guests to our modified program. We appreciate you all helping to mitigate and adapt to share your passion for Minnesota history and to connect our community to hands-on learning. Your connections allow all to feel welcomed here!



The Winter Play Day event in February was a success throughout the Park District. Hyland hosted the big event with live music, vendors, food trucks, outdoor yoga, snowshoeing, kicksledding and more! Over 2,000 visitors came to play in the snow. Thanks to the Hyland maintenance crew for making snow for the event. Thank you to all the volunteers and staff that made this event such a success, including volunteers at RNC who handed out s'mores and kept the campfire going.



Thank you Candlelight and Chocolate Volunteers! The extension of the lantern-lit trail this year created a magical experience up to the Osprey Overlook. Thank you for the help with set-up and clean-up, plating desserts, lighting lanterns, welcoming guests and re-filling coffee and water.

