



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

Silverwood Park's Mission Is:

Through quality experiences in nature and the arts, we foster lasting connections to the environment, each other and ourselves.



Old Growth Forests

A different way of life for a forest

By Kenzie Romportl

As our forests come back to life slowly but surely, I begin to reflect on their cycles. Fresh from a trip to the Redwoods in California it feels hard not to compare the cycles of protected old growth rainforest, teeming with 12-foot diameter coast redwoods, to the oak savannah we have here at Silverwood. I was struck by the dynamic nature of such an old forest in California. Many of the trees are over a thousand years old, some burnt hollow at the base from fires years ago and still thriving 300 feet up. Others' shallow roots couldn't handle being waterlogged during a particularly wet season. Their bodies are laid to rest in a splintered fall, over time unrecognizable and becoming their own ecosystem of ferns, fungus, lichen, and homes to over 4000 organisms. It gives a certain life to a forest that simply cannot be replicated without the hundreds of years relatively free from human disturbance. This unimaginable environment is one that supports over 1700 plants and animals like the Wandering Salamander in its canopy, the endangered marbled murrelet and numerous epiphytic plants clinging to branches. Scientists even discovered a 40-foot eastern hemlock growing hundreds of feet off the ground!

Here in Minnesota, old growth is harder to find, but still possible! For a forest to be considered old growth it must fit certain categories. According to the Minnesota DNR it must have developed over a long period of time, be free from catastrophic disturbances, contain large, old trees of long-lived species, have a complex stand structure with snags and debris, and few invasive species. There are also specific requirements depending on the dominant tree of the forest. Old growth forests provide us with a look into a world that hasn't been touched, to remind us of what could have been and to encourage us to continue to protect our beautiful forests.

I encourage everyone to explore an old growth forest if possible. It will no doubt leave you in awe of the cycles around us! If you search "Visit an old-growth forest, MN DNR" you will be brought to the map to the right, and be able to click on each location to learn more.



Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteer Docents

Become an art and nature docent at Silverwood Park's gallery. We are searching for volunteers to be present in the gallery during busy weekend times, primarily Saturdays and Sundays from 1PM-3PM. Docents are meant to invite park guests to talk about and engage with the art in the gallery, relating it to the outdoors and environmental themes. Becoming a docent requires a group training with Silverwood staff. Then, docents work independently, signing up for shifts in small groups or on their own. For more information contact Seth Eberle at seth.eberle@threeiversparks.org.

Program Assistant Opportunities

Teen Adventures: Canoe and Natural Dye

Saturday, June 11
1PM-4PM

Canoe Assistant (1-2 Volunteers). Get out on the water with a group of teens and Silverwood staff. help ensure that everyone stays safe while paddling. Volunteers must be 21+ since this program serves teens. Best for those who are comfortable paddling and are comfortable with teenagers.

Puppet Adventures and Let's Get StARTed

Sundays, June 12, July 10, August 14
12:30PM-3PM

Art Assistants (2-4 Volunteers). Assist families and children with making art and learning about nature after a puppet show. Program runs from 1PM-3PM with a puppet show promptly at 1PM. This program will take place primarily outdoors as the weather permits and is best for folks who enjoy enthusiastically explaining instructions and are comfortable standing for most of the program.

Make and Mingle

Tuesday, June 21
6PM-9PM

Event Assistants (5-6 Volunteers). Assist with art-making, a photo booth, and a hike during our seasonal Make and Mingle Event. Best for those who enjoy working with adults and a laid back atmosphere. Must be 21+.

Pop Up Kite Making Event

Wednesday, July 6
5PM-6:30PM

Event Assistants (2-3 Volunteers). Pop up before the summer concert to help parkgoers create artistic kites, blow bubbles, and enjoy themselves before the summer concert that evening

Float in Movie

Friday, July 16
8PM-10PM

Traffic Controllers (2-3 Volunteers). Direct those who are attending the Float in Movie about where things are in the park, where to go for the film, and how to get back to the parking lot after the film. Best for those who are friendly and helpful with large crowds.

E-cology

Saturday, July 23
6:30PM-8PM

Event Assistants (5-7 Volunteers). Assist in creating an evening where Silverwood Park turns into a giant board game. Best for those who are flexible, enjoy playing games, and are nerds themselves. Must be 21+.

Pop Up Art Bike Parade

Wednesday, August 3
4PM-6PM

Decorator Assistants and Bike Parade Safety(2-3 Volunteers). Help participants use art materials supplied to decorate their bikes. Then, join the parade around the Great Lawn just before a summer concert. Best for those who enjoy working with kids and are comfortable riding a bike.



Volunteer Opportunities

Community Science Projects

In addition to Silverwood's events, we are continuing to expand our monitoring, community science, and data collection opportunities. All of these opportunities require access to a smart device or a computer in order to enter data.

Bee Monitoring (1-2 Volunteers). Spend time around Silverwood's flowers taking video or photographing bees to help us get a sense of which kinds of bees are in the park. Best for those who can commit to monitoring weekly and are patient.

Project NestWatch (3-5 Volunteers). Using the project NestWatch protocol, find and observe nests at Silverwood park, making observations about brood success, while keeping animals safe and minimizing interference with nests. Best for those who are comfortable being adventurous off trail, respectful of animals, and can consistently follow protocol for nest observations.

Water Quality (2-3 Volunteers). Use a secchi disc and other water quality tools to put data in the Lake Observer App every other week. Best for those who can commit to observations consistently every other week and are comfortable getting wet.

Garden Volunteers (1 Volunteer). Water and weed our garden beds, being sure not to overwater. Best for those who are comfortable working independently and like to get dirty.



Silverwood Volunteer Appreciation Concert on June 15!

Silverwood's volunteers truly help make the park an amazing place to be. We want to thank you for all you have done, no matter how much time you have given to volunteering, come to the first concert of the summer at Silverwood Park. Register in advance by emailing Seth Eberle at seth.eberle@threeriversparks.org to receive a free volunteer appreciation kit with art-making activity, light refreshments, and other signs of our thanks to you for helping make Silverwood an amazing place to be.



Volunteer Opportunities

Summer Camp Assistants

Help our campers have the best experience they can have! Summer Camp Assistants are great for teen volunteers or adults who are interested in helping young children have a fun and joyful art making and outdoor education experience. This role is best for those who enjoy being around children, getting messy with art supplies, and being outdoors running around in the mud and dirt. It is excellent for those who are patient and helpful with re-explaining instructions.

Each camp can have 1-2 volunteers. If you can only assist on certain days, it may still be possible to volunteer. Let Seth know.

Digging in Clay: Wheel Throwing

June 13-16
9AM-12PM

It's Time to Tinker

June 27-30
9AM-12PM

Digging in Clay: What in the World?

June 27-30
1PM-4PM

Camp Doodlebugs: Fantasy Creatures

July 11-14
1PM-3PM

Digging in Clay: Wheel Throwing

July 11-14
1PM-4PM

Snapshot Scientific

July 25-28
9AM-12PM

Nature's Protectors

July 25-28
1PM-4PM



To volunteer for any of these opportunities, please call or email Seth Eberle at seth.eberle@threeriverspark.s.org or 612-508-6217. He will connect you with the staff person leading the program or project.

