

2023 Fall and 2023-24 Winter

Outdoor Recreation School Volunteer Newsletter



Happy Fall!

Thank you so much ORS volunteers for all your help with our busy summer! We had over 200 programs available for volunteers to help support this summer! Wow! Never could we have done it without your assistance. Thank you for helping move and prepare paddling equipment, providing encouragement to new paddlers, riding along the bike trails at summer camp, taking up sweep on trail hikes, keeping an eye out for our anglers along the rivers and so much more. We had a lot of new faces join the ORS volunteer crew this summer – we hope all volunteers new and veteran with ORS had a great summer helping support the ORS mission of “creating outdoor recreation experiences that connect, inspire, and educate for a lifetime of play in the natural world”. Fall programming is now underway, even though sometimes the weather still feels like summer. We still have a wide variety of fall programs available to help with if you would like to join us in the parks this season. And before you know it, we will be getting our winter programs and equipment ready to go. So, if cold weather activities are something you would like to help us connect youth, families and adults to, we hope you will consider joining us on the ski trails and such when the snow starts to fly! The newsletter below has lots of info about what ORS has been up to this summer, what is happening this fall, ways to connect with volunteers/staff socially and what to look forward to this winter. Thank you so much, as always, for all that our volunteers do to make ORS great! We appreciate it so much and we look forward to seeing you all soon!

Heather 😊

Volunteer Liaison for Outdoor Recreation School

Fall Volunteer Recognition and Potluck

Save the Date: Tuesday, November 14 from 6-730PM at French Regional Park Visitor Center

We look forward to gathering this fall to celebrate and show our thanks for the great work the ORS volunteer crew does for us all year long! We hope you will be able to join us for this fun gathering. The event will include a potluck and volunteer recognition. Volunteers are welcome to bring spouses, family members or other guests. The more the merrier! Please RSVP to Heather.Gordon@threeriversparks.org if you are able to attend. More details will be sent as the event nears. Hope to see you there!



Outdoor Recreation School featured in media.

ORS Staff and Volunteers were featured in a story on WCCO after the MN Spinal Cord Association Demo Day at Fish Lake. Check out the video on [this website](#).



The Outdoor Recreation School was involved in two award winning programs this year – our mentored fishing program and Innovative SOULutions. ORS Volunteers have played a major role in the success of these programs. A little bit more information about these awards can be found at [this link](#).

ORS Volunteer, Craig Wicklund, called in to Angela Davis’s program on Minnesota Public Radio in July when she was discussing boating in MN. The entire program can be found at [this link](#). Craig was on the show at about the 31st minute.



Craig took this photo on a paddling trip to the Caribbean earlier this year.

Transition to Updated VicNet

Volgistics is retiring the current version of VicNet September 27. The new updated VicNet is ready to go and is on the Volunteer Resource Center. What’s so different? The core functions of VicNet remain the same, but it looks much different and menu items are in different areas instead of tabs all in one place. If you use VicNet on a mobile device, there is now a free app you can download that will make mobile access and use easier.

The staff at Volgistics have put together a very helpful guide that walks you through the changes. There is also information on how to download the app as well. [Here is a link](#) to the guide.

[Here is the link](#) for the updated VicNet. If you use bookmarks or other shortcuts to access VicNet, please update those with the new link. You can use either version of VicNet until September 27. If you have any questions, please contact the Volunteer Office.

Bike Volunteering

Thank you to all of our new and returning bike camp volunteers this summer. Your support of the bike camps was greatly appreciated by staff. For the mountain bikers out there, keep an eye out for opportunities to join as a volunteer for our mountain bike camps in 2024.



Fall Volunteering with ORS

If you haven't recently seen the full list of fall opportunities still available to sign up for and you are interested in helping out this fall, please send an email to Heather.Gordon@threeriversparks.org and she will send you a list of current openings. Here are descriptions for our remaining fall volunteer openings.

Archery Volunteers

Help us introduce the sport of archery to youth, adults and families. Assist with range set up, range monitoring, and coaching individuals on shooting techniques.

REQUIREMENTS and TRAINING: No advanced training needed; volunteers will be given a brief orientation on their role when they arrive for the program. Be able to learn archery range rules and the role of range watcher.

ACTIVITY LEVEL: Easy to Moderate, some lifting of equipment is involved for those up for a moderate level of activity.

Fire Building Volunteers

Assist ORS staff in monitoring participants as they learn the camping skill of building a fire. Participants will be collecting firewood and building fires in small metal pans on the ground.

REQUIREMENTS and TRAINING: No advanced training needed. Volunteers will be given a brief orientation on their role when they arrive for the program.

ACTIVITY LEVEL: Easy, note - bending and kneeling to monitor and troubleshoot with the small fires may be helpful but is not required.

Nordic Walking/Hiking Volunteers

Volunteers will be in a sweep or rover role, helping keep the group together while also chatting with participants and sharing knowledge about the parks.

REQUIREMENTS and TRAINING: No experience or advanced training needed, just a desire to socialize with participants and help them enjoy the beauty of the parks.

ACTIVITY LEVEL: Easy to Moderate, depending on group fitness levels and program goals.

Cross-Country Ski Programs and Volunteer Training

Save the Date: Tuesday, December 5 from 5:30-7PM at Elm Creek Park Reserve.



We are looking for volunteers for beginner classic and skate lessons this winter. We offer lessons for adults, families and kids. You do not need to be a great skier, but you should be comfortable on skis. Volunteers will assist with greeting participants and helping them get their ski rentals, helping participants get into their skis on the snow, being cheerleader and overall moral support for the stragglers in the lesson. Please send an email to Heather.Gordon@threeriversparks.org if you plan to attend training. Training is required for all new cross-country ski volunteers OR volunteers who took training in 2021 or prior.

Winter Gear Needed

We are looking for snowpants and winter coats to keep on hand for large school groups. Do you have any unused items at your house that you would be willing to donate? Sizes needs are Youth Large/XL, plus adult sizes. We also have a need for winter boots size 5 or larger. If you have any items to donate, please be in touch with Heather at Heather.Gordon@threeriversparks.org



Pie/Pi Day Hike

Save the Date: Thursday, March 14 from 5-6:30PM at Richardson Nature Center



We are going to partner up with some of the staff and volunteers from Richardson Nature Center for a casual gathering. We will chat, drink warm beverages, eat pie and take a short hike. Hope you can join the fun! RSVP to Heather.Gordon@threeriversparks.org

Winter Volunteering with ORS

The full list of opportunities will be available to sign up in early November. To get you thinking about winter, here is a list of descriptions for our winter volunteer positions. If you are not already on Heather's "weeklyish volunteer email list" – please send an email to Heather.Gordon@threeriversparks.org to make sure you get a copy of the winter signup list when it is available.

Cross-Country Ski Volunteers

Assist with public lessons and private programs. Assist with equipment, group management and moral support for new skiers.

REQUIREMENTS and TRAINING: Attend Cross-Country Ski Volunteer Training every two years. Volunteers do not need to be expert skiers; however, they should be comfortable and confident on skis and be able to ski a variety of trail conditions including gradual up and down hills.

ACTIVITY LEVEL: Easy to moderate, most of the program time is spent in the lesson area, if there is a short ski tour staff will assign you to a trail and distance that is at your preferred level.

Ice Fishing Volunteers

Get involved with teaching youth and adults how to fish during the winter months.

REQUIREMENTS and TRAINING: We are looking for volunteers who have basic knowledge of fishing equipment, fishing knots and native fish species. You don't have to be an expert! There is no specific training, staff will get you up to speed at each program.

ACTIVITY LEVEL: Easy to moderate, best for those who love the cold too!

Snowshoeing Volunteers

Explore the off-trail areas of our beautiful parks while assisting our staff with programs. Volunteers are also very helpful in getting participants fitted in their snowshoes.

REQUIREMENTS and TRAINING: No previous experience required, just a desire to help folks enjoy the beauty of the parks in the winter! There is no specific training, staff will get you up to speed at each program.

ACTIVITY LEVEL: Easy to moderate, staff will assign you to portions of the program with participants at an activity level similar to your preferred level.

