



Three Rivers

PARK DISTRICT

A decorative background graphic consisting of several overlapping, rounded hills or waves. The colors transition from a light yellow-green at the top left, through a light green, to a dark green at the bottom. A light blue wave is also visible on the right side, overlapping the green ones.

Volunteer Handbook

2020

Volunteer Handbook

Table of Contents

Overview of Three Rivers Park District

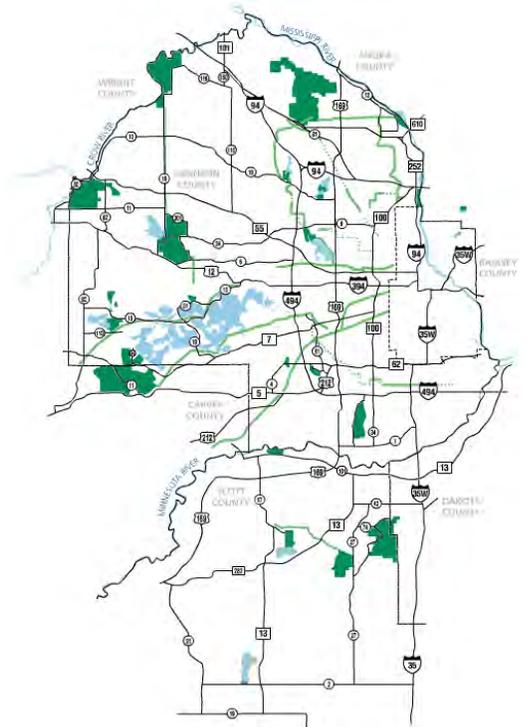
Mission _____ 3
 Summary of Services _____ 3
 Vision _____ 3

General Volunteer Information

Getting Started _____ 4
 Supervision _____ 4
 Scheduling and Reporting Hours _____ 4
 What the Park District Provides _____ 5
 What the Volunteer Provides _____ 5
 Volunteer Benefits _____ 6

Policies and Procedures

Discrimination and Harassment _____ 7
 Firearms and Dangerous Weapons _____ 7
 Americans with Disabilities Act _____ 7
 Volunteer Standards _____ 7
 Public Interaction _____ 8
 Child Safety _____ 8
 Park Ordinances and Rules _____ 8
 Handling Emergencies _____ 9
 Severe Weather _____ 10
 Injury Prevention and Reporting _____ 11



Volunteer Resources

Office Information

French Regional Park
 Field Operations Center
 12615 Rockford Road
 Plymouth, MN 55441

Phone: 763.559.6706
 Fax: 763.557.4943

Email: volunteer@threeriversparks.org

Website: ThreeRiversParks.org/volunteer
 Facebook: [Facebook.com/volunteer3riversparks](https://www.facebook.com/volunteer3riversparks)



Overview of Three Rivers Park District

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

SUMMARY OF SERVICES:

Three Rivers Park District provides opportunities for people to enhance their lives and increase their enjoyment and well-being through outdoor recreation and education in a natural resources-based park system. This is accomplished through three components: Outdoor Education, Outdoor Recreation, and Natural Resources Management.

PARK DISTRICT VISION:

Through leadership, advocacy, innovation and action, the vision of Three Rivers is to be a model of a sustainable regional system of parks and trails that meets the needs of the present while ensuring the needs of future generations are well-met.

The Vision will be achieved through five actionable goals¹:

1) **PROTECT** the region's water and natural resources by

- ◇ Implementing a new parkland classification system with Natural Areas, Greenways and Blueways;
- ◇ Adopting a plan for waste reduction and greenhouse gas emission; and
- ◇ Pioneering natural resources management projects including invasive species research and control, water quality protection, and education efforts.

2) **INSPIRE** people to recreate by

- ◇ Reaching out to the diverse populations of Hennepin County and developing actions to address the desires and constraints related to the regional park system; and
- ◇ Promoting the parks as an alternative health/exercise provider.

¹To achieve these goals, 31 Actions are to be implemented over the next 10 years. More information on the Vision Plan and goals provided upon request.

3) **CONNECT** people to nature by

- ◇ Promoting environmental education through a program designed to provide meaningful and appealing learning experiences for all ages; and
- ◇ Promoting mentoring and outdoor leadership training to better connect teens and young adults to nature.

4) **CREATE** vibrant places by

- ◇ Restoring the non-paved trail network; and
- ◇ Completing critical links in the existing trail network within the fully-developed cities of suburban Hennepin County.

5) **COLLABORATE** across boundaries by

- ◇ Advocating for a comprehensive 2100 Vision Plan for the Twin Cities Area;
- ◇ Partnering with local communities in efforts to minimize impacts on regional parklands;
- ◇ Advocating for stronger regional and legislative protection of publicly owned open space;
- ◇ Working with other agencies and entities to explore pooling resources to maximize efficiencies and products; and
- ◇ Partnering and promoting the development of a joint natural resources management plan for the Park District's service area.

Learn more about Three Rivers Park District: <https://www.threeriversparks.org/page/about-us>

Learn more about Three Rivers Park District Foundation: <http://threeriversparksfdn.org/>

General Volunteer Information

GETTING STARTED:

To share your talents and passion with us:

- 1) **SELECT** a volunteer position.
- 2) **CONTACT** the supervisor listed in the Volunteer Newsletter to register for the position and obtain the link to our online volunteer application form.
- 3) **FILL OUT** the online volunteer application form. This registers you as an official volunteer for the Park District and, combined with reporting hours, qualifies you for benefits provided to active volunteers. Prior to volunteering, a background check must also be completed (new volunteers ages 14+).
- 4) **ATTEND** required training sessions.
- 5) **KEEP IN TOUCH!** Contact your supervisor or the Volunteer Office with **ANY** questions.



SUPERVISION:

Designated staff at each site supervise volunteers. The assigned volunteer supervisor provides schedules, project information and training for each volunteer position.

SCHEDULING AND REPORTING HOURS:

Schedule all volunteer shifts with your supervisor. Arrive on time or a little early. Call if an emergency occurs and you cannot make your shift; staff and other volunteers count on you to fulfill your commitment.

Report all volunteer hours by signing in and out for your shift. Each volunteer location provides either a paper or electronic sign-in. If one is not provided, ask Park staff how to record your hours. Volunteer hours show community involvement in the Park District to the public and Board of Commissioners. Even though you may not want the benefits offered to you, by reporting your hours you help track contributions made to the Park District.

THREE RIVERS PROVIDES:

- **Site orientation.**
- **Volunteer Handbook** and **procedures** to familiarize you with your volunteer position.
- A **Three Rivers T-shirt, name tag, supplies,** and **other materials needed** for your volunteer position.
- **Training** for your volunteer position. Additional training and skills workshops may be offered to increase skill level and provide personal growth opportunities.
- **Volunteer Resources.** Your supervisor and Volunteer Office staff offer ongoing support for the development of your skills, interests and abilities. Hours information and performance evaluation are provided upon request.
- **Volunteer Benefits** based on number of hours worked and other criteria as approved by the Superintendent and Board of Commissioners. Each site may offer additional benefits.
- A copy of the **Programs and Events Guide.**
- **Volunteer Newsletters.** A newsletter is sent each March and August listing current volunteer opportunities District-wide. Your site/work group may send additional newsletters.
- **Email Communication.** Email announcements are sent from the Volunteer Office or your site/work group.
- **Waiver from user fees** while on-duty.
- **Liability Insurance and Workers Compensation Coverage** during volunteer hours worked:
 - ◊ Third party liability coverage for both personal injury and property damage;
 - ◊ Workers Compensation coverage including protection for medical expenses and lost wages. *Every effort will be made to return an injured volunteer to work as soon as possible. Report any injury to your supervisor immediately. Your supervisor directs you to a hospital or clinic for treatment and assists with required forms (see page 9 of this Handbook).*
 - ◊ If you use your personal vehicle for Park District business, your automobile insurance will provide primary coverage. If liability exceeds the amount of primary coverage, the Park District's business auto insurance may provide secondary coverage. This coverage does not include physical damage to your vehicle.

YOU PROVIDE:

- **Attendance** at required training sessions.
- **Commitment** to a schedule for your work area. You are responsible for notifying staff if you cannot meet your obligation prior to your scheduled shift.
- **Travel** to and from training and work locations.
- Personal **clothing, snacks** or **meals** while on-duty.
- **Training expenses**, when applicable (e.g., CPR, first aid).



Volunteer Benefits

Annual Recognition

Thank You Letters and Zipper Pulls

Thank you letters are sent each spring for the previous year's contributions. A special edition zipper pull is also sent if you volunteer 15+ hours in a calendar year.

Distinguished Volunteer Service Award

Up to six outstanding volunteers are recognized as part of the Distinguished Volunteer Service Award each spring. Volunteers, staff, and the public nominate volunteers for this award. Award recipients are selected by a committee of one volunteer and five staff members (representing the various areas volunteers work). The deadline for nominations is late January-early February. A ceremony before the Board of Commissioners is held in April.



District-wide Hour Awards

Volunteer Fun Pass

Issued annually, the **Volunteer Fun Pass** offers access to activity passes, programs, and rentals at reduced rates or for free and provides greater rewards the more you volunteer (visit our website for more details).

Additional Hour Awards

Below is a list of additional awards given based on the total number of hours served. These awards are distributed semi-annually or as each milestone is reached.

30 hours

A **volunteer patch** and a **Park District logo pin** are given after 30 hours of service, which may be worn while volunteering or kept as a memento.

50 hours

A 50-hour **arc (patch)** is given after 50 hours of service. This patch may also be worn while volunteering or kept as a memento. You may request additional arcs for each 50-hour milestone. After 50 hours or more of volunteer service you will also receive a personal, **engraved name tag**.

100-2,000 hours

Specially designed **nature pins** are awarded after 100 hours of service and each 250-hour milestone through 2,000 hours.

2,250-3,000 hours

A **framed nature photograph** with an engraved bronze plate is awarded at 2,250, 2,500, 2,750 and 3,000 hours.

3,250-4,000 hours

Clothing items embroidered with the Park District logo and hours milestone are awarded at 3,250 hours (denim shirt), 3,500 hours (fleece vest), 3,750 hours (fleece jacket) and 4,000 hours (wind or rain jacket).

4,250+ hours

At every 250-hour milestone starting at 4,250 hours, you are eligible for a **tree** planted in your honor in the Volunteer Forest at Hyland Lake Park Reserve and a **one-on-one lunch** with the Associate Superintendent of your choice.

5,000+ hours

At every 1,000-hour milestone starting at 5,000 hours, you are eligible to receive a **special experience** for you and a small group of family/friends or a **handcrafted item** made by Three Rivers staff. This is in addition to the 4,250+ hour awards listed above.

Policies and Procedures

VOLUNTEER STANDARDS:

- As a representative of Three Rivers Park District, please conduct yourself in a **courteous, responsible** and **conscientious** manner with a **clean** and **neat** appearance. A name tag and Three Rivers shirt are provided and should be worn if possible.
- You are expected to **understand** and **support** the Park District's **mission** statement.
- You serve at the will of the Park District, which, solely at its discretion, determines who serves as a volunteer and may dismiss you at any time with or without cause.
- **Drug and alcohol use** is strictly prohibited while on duty or at any time on the day of service.
- **Smoking** and the use of **tobacco products** is prohibited in all Park District buildings. Please refrain from smoking and using tobacco products while on duty. These products include cigarettes, tobacco, and the use of devices such as e-cigarettes, pipes and vaporizers. Smoking and tobacco use while on break is allowed in designated areas identified by the site supervisor.
- All new ongoing and temporary volunteers ages 14 and older must complete a **background check** prior to volunteering. Current, ongoing volunteers working in the vicinity of children, will be asked to fill out an online form so a **background check** can be conducted. If a volunteer has been inactive for 2 years, the volunteer must complete a **background check** prior to volunteering.

DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT:

Three Rivers seeks to maintain non-discriminatory volunteer and employee practices and a work environment free from all forms of protected class discrimination or harassment. ***The Park District will not tolerate protected-class discrimination or harassment toward its employees or volunteers, nor will it tolerate reprisals against anyone who makes a complaint or cooperates in a complaint inquiry or investigation.*** This policy applies to applicants, employees, contractors, interns, apprentices, and volunteers. While it sets forth goals of promoting a workplace free of discrimination and harassment, it is not designed or intended to limit our authority to discipline or take remedial action for workplace conduct deemed unacceptable by the Park District, regardless whether the conduct satisfies the definition of discrimination or sexual harassment.

FIREARMS AND DANGEROUS WEAPONS:

When acting within the course and scope of your position, you are prohibited from possessing, holding, storing, keeping, carrying or discharging a firearm, including pistols, BB guns, spear, bow and arrow, crossbow, slingshot, air or gas weapon, paintball gun, or any other dangerous weapon, except licensed Peace Officers, Wildlife Section, Maintenance, and Forestry staff who are required and trained to do so for their authorized duties. If you violate this policy, you will be subject to discipline, up to and including discharge. Permit holders could have a pistol stored and properly secured in their vehicle, provided the vehicle is not used in any way for Park District work purposes. ***A copy of these policies are available upon request. Questions or concerns should be directed to your supervisor, a Volunteer Coordinator (763.559.6706) or the Human Resources Manager (763.559.6753).***

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT:

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1991 requires information and services to be provided to persons with disabilities. With sufficient notice, Park District information and educational literature is available in Braille, large print, or on audio tape; sign language interpreters are available with at least 10 days notice prior to a scheduled program. ***The TTY (Text Telephone) number is 763.559.6719. Refer general public requests to the Division Coordinator of Recreation and Education (763.694.7628).*** Outdoor Education staff's goal is to provide programs that integrate all abilities. Many areas and facilities are designed or adapted to meet or exceed accessibility codes. ***Refer questions or concerns about facility or program accessibility to the Director of Facility Services (763.559.6702).*** You should help accommodate persons with disabilities. This assistance does not include direct personal care, such as lifting, feeding, or direct help using toilets.

PUBLIC INTERACTION:

Greeting the Public

Greet park guests in a friendly manner. Give your first name and volunteer position to anyone who requests it. Do not communicate confidential or critical information concerning the park or its staff to any person except an authorized agent or employee of Three Rivers. ***Refer all contact with news media and public questions of a sensitive nature to your supervisor or the Media Relations Specialist (763.355.4685).***

Providing Information

Accuracy of information provided to park guests is important. If in doubt, verify with your supervisor, other park staff, Park Police or the Volunteer Office. If you do not know an answer, refer the person to the trailhead, appropriate staff or take their name and number so your supervisor can handle the inquiry.

Complaints from Park Guests

Occasionally you will get complaints from park guests when their expectations have not been met:

- 1) Please handle these if they are within the range of your knowledge.
- 2) If you are unable resolve the complaint, attempt to contact a Park District staff person who can.
- 3) Write down complaints that cannot be settled immediately and give to your supervisor as soon as possible.
- 4) If needed, obtain the person's name and phone number so a follow-up call can be made. If they prefer to call someone themselves, give them the appropriate phone number to call.
- 5) If the complaint warrants it and a park supervisor is not readily available, contact Park Police.
- 6) Do not argue or appear annoyed. Explain you are a volunteer and the complaint must be handled by a person with appropriate authority. Thank the person for expressing their concern; tell them their feedback is important and something is being done to resolve it.

Child Safety

To protect the children we serve, volunteers, employees and the Park District:

- At no time may a volunteer or employee be alone with a single child where he or she cannot be observed by others.
- Ongoing and temporary volunteers ages 14 and older must complete a background check before starting.

PARK ORDINANCES AND RULES:

Please be familiar with Park Ordinances, found online at ThreeRiversParks.org, keyword search "Public Safety".

If you observe park guests breaking ordinances or rules, please approach those involved and request compliance. Do your best to resolve the situation using insight, intelligence and courtesy. Do not argue. A courteous smile often eases a difficult situation.

If the situation appears un-resolvable or beyond your control, contact the site Supervisor and/or Park Police immediately and turn it over to them. As a volunteer, it is not your responsibility to enforce ordinances and rules; do your best to help educate park guests about park rules in a positive manner.

Be alert. Try to detect potential problems before they develop. Use your best judgment and take the necessary steps to correct an issue before it develops too far. Take note of unusual occurrences. Try to remember descriptions of people or vehicles (license #, color, make etc.) activity, time, location, etc., anything that might help Park Police. ***Report all unusual conditions, accidents and other matters that occur during your shift to your supervisor.***

HANDLING EMERGENCIES:

Kinds of Emergencies

- Injury to a person
- Environmental (hyperthermia and hypothermia)
- Water accidents (drowning, falling through ice, boat capsizing)
- Severe weather
- Lost persons
- Mechanical breakdown
- Emergency messages
- Fire
- Theft

Whom You Should Contact

• 911

Ask the dispatcher to contact a Three Rivers Park District Police Officer. (Be prepared to give your location, including city.) (Except in parks in Scott County).

• Park Staff

Notify your supervisor or other designated staff immediately; they will notify facility attendants and other staff to help direct Park Police or other emergency responders. 911 may be used for non-emergencies as well; check with park staff first.

When Contacting Help:

- 1) Give a complete account of what has or is occurring.
- 2) Be prepared to give your exact location.
 - a) Know major highways and streets.
 - b) Know directions: north, south, east, west
 - c) Note landmarks, names of trails and buildings, trail junctions, distance from access points, etc.
- 3) Identify who you are.
- 4) Answer any questions they ask.
- 5) Let them hang up first.
- 6) If possible, stay by the phone; they may call back.
- 7) Stay with the situation until stabilized or in the hands of a more qualified person.
- 8) When emergency vehicles are en route, if possible, inform a gate attendant where the emergency occurred so they can help direct the responder.

Key Emergency Park District Staff

• Public Safety Staff

- ◊ **Park Police Officers** can be dispatched to any of our park locations at any time. They are sworn peace officers, able to issue moving citations, make arrests, and often assist local police departments. They are also Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT).

• Facility Staff

- ◊ **Park Operations Supervisors** oversee park operations.
- ◊ **Facility Supervisors** oversee facility operations.
- ◊ **Park Service Assistants (PSA)** Assist facility staff and Park Police with facility, public relations, security and safety support.

• Additional Staff

- ◊ **Nature Center Supervisors; additional supervisors** oversee various areas.

SEVERE WEATHER:

Severe Weather Recognition (Summer)

A timely warning is needed to avoid confusion and injury in the event of severe weather. Do not assume employees and other volunteers know about impending severe weather. Check with staff if you know of a warning/watch and wait for instructions.

Severe thunderstorms and **tornadoes** are common in our region from April through September. Storm severity is often indicated by the amount of lightning: the more lightning, the more severe the storm, the higher chance for strong winds or tornados. Seek shelter at the first sign of lightning.

The best radio stations for accurate weather information are AM stations WCCO 830 and KSTP 1500. There are weather radios at most park locations.

Staff, Volunteer & Park Guest Notification

When severe weather threatens, Public Safety staff and/or weather radios will inform facility staff of weather advisories. Facility staff will then notify volunteers signed-in at their location. Your first concern is to seek shelter. If you are not in immediate danger, assist park staff as needed.

Public Safety staff and facility staff will alert park guests of the situation; however, they will not tell them to leave the park. Park guests are advised of shelter locations and allowed to make their own decision.

If a severe windstorm or tornado strikes, remain calm. Depending on safety concerns and skill level required, volunteer assistance may be helpful with search operations, first aid, traffic control, message delivery, etc.

Severe Weather Shelter

Each park has a severe weather plan. Please check the plan for specific shelter sites at your park.

If indoors, seek shelter in a basement or below grade area. If no basement is available, go to a small interior room. Avoid windows and potentially hazardous objects.

If outdoors and no shelter is available, lie flat in a low lying depression. Avoid water, high ground, tall objects, areas that might flood, and debris that may be blown on top of you.



INJURY PREVENTION AND REPORTING:

Everything possible should be done to prevent injuries; however, when they do occur, specific procedures must be followed. Contact Human Resources (763.559.6731) about work-related injuries.

Risk Management

The Park District wants to protect itself against accidental losses, which amassed during any financial period may significantly affect Park District personnel, property, its budget, or ability to fulfill its responsibilities.

The Park District resolves that any loss of life or serious personal injury to employees, volunteers or members of the general public is unacceptable. The Park District manages its risks of accidental loss by applying a process that includes the following:

- Systematic and continuous identification of loss exposure;
- Analysis of these exposures in terms of frequency and severity;
- Application of sound loss prevention and loss procedures;
- Ongoing review of available and economically beneficial risk transfer alternatives; and
- Retention or self-funding of the risk consistent with the District's financial resources and statutory obligations.

Loss Prevention Statement

The Park District has gone on record as promoting a Risk Management Policy which will prevent the loss of life or serious personal injury to employees or members of the general public. ***It is your responsibility to be aware of your surroundings and to take notice of any unsafe act or condition. Bring these situations to your supervisor's attention for corrective action.***

If you feel the Park District has not properly responded to a safety concern, email the Safety Committee at safety@threeriversparks.org, which administers and coordinates the Park District's overall safety program.

Safety

The Park District's Safety Program objectives are to:

- **PREVENT** accidents of park personnel and visitors;
- **PROMOTE** emergency response and preparedness so that accidents and the emergencies they create will be handled effectively by Park District personnel; and
- **PROTECT** Park District property.

If Injured:

If injury occurs while on-duty, the following actions should be taken:

- The injured party is to be attended to **immediately**.
- **In case of serious injury**, call 911 so the injured person can be transported to the closest hospital by ambulance or other emergency vehicle.
- **For all other on-duty injuries** (back injury, sprains, hernias, etc.) the injured party should be sent or taken to a designated clinic. Check online (<https://www.threeriversparks.org/page/volunteer-resource-center>) or with your supervisor for a list.
- **In all cases**, the injured person reports the loss to their supervisor immediately. The supervisor assists the volunteer in filling out the Volunteer Report of Injury form, completes the Supervisor's Report of Injury form and sends to the Human Resources Office.

The injured party must report the loss immediately. The supervisor must send a report to Human Resources the same day. Additions or clarifications can be made at a later date.

**THANK YOU for your service to the
Three Rivers Park District!**

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