



VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

Saint Paul Parks and Recreation—Natural Resources

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Welcome!

Dear Volunteer,

Thank you so much for your interest in helping Saint Paul Parks and Recreation (SPPR) make Saint Paul the most livable city in America!

Our volunteers have an incredible and often immeasurable impact on our parks and natural areas. They help to...

- Greet and guide park visitors to help them have a pleasant and successful visit
- Actively protect and restore Saint Paul's natural areas
- Keep our parks clean, creating a safer and healthier environment for residents
- Ignite a lifelong appreciation of the outdoors in young people
- Expand citizens' understanding of the environment surrounding them
- Teach park visitors about the natural, historical and cultural aspects of our parks
- Inspire others to become stewards of the environment
- Increase SPPR's capacity to engage the public in actively restoring and protecting our natural resources
- Generate pride in our parks and demonstrate their commitment to their community
- And so much more!

Volunteers enhance our ability to improve the environment and educate the community. Volunteers provide valuable input, experience and service. A successful volunteer program compliments the abilities of our staff by expanding the reach and impact of our programming.

Thank you for your commitment to Saint Paul parks and natural areas. We hope this handbook helps you make the most of your volunteer service by providing you with relevant and pertinent information.

Our very best,

Saint Paul Natural Resources Team

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About This Handbook

Thank you, again, for your commitment to Saint Paul's parks and natural areas. You join a corps of thousands of individuals who in turn contribute thousands of hours each year as private group volunteers, Garden Stewards, Greenhouse Assistants, Volunteer Naturalists, Education Assistants, Restoration Supervisors, Eco Stewards, and soon, Park Patrol volunteers.

We hope this handbook will successfully guide you through your volunteer experience with Saint Paul Natural Resources. In this handbook you will find our policies and procedures, information regarding your volunteer service, and helpful information about our parks and natural areas.

Saint Paul Natural Resources reserves the right to modify volunteer policies in this handbook without prior notice. The policies in this handbook replace any previous versions of policies or procedures provided.

Natural Resources 101

The Natural Resources section of Parks and Recreation maintains the trees, gardens, and natural areas of Saint Paul. We also provide environmental education, offer volunteer opportunities, and find grants to make Saint Paul the most livable city in America.

Mission—Saint Paul Parks and Recreation

To help make Saint Paul the most livable city in America, Saint Paul Parks and Recreation will facilitate the creation of active lifestyles, vibrant places, and a vital environment.

Mission—Parks and Natural Resources Volunteer Program

To connect community members with Saint Paul parks and natural resources to create a healthy environment and beautiful city.

Goals and Expectations

In many ways, our volunteers are subject to the same rules and regulations as a paid employee. This is because as a volunteer you represent Saint Paul Parks and Recreation to the public.

We expect Saint Paul Natural Resources volunteers to:

- Respect the environment, fellow volunteers, staff, and the public.
- Perform your volunteer position duties as outline in your volunteer position description.

Saint Paul Natural Resources Provides

We try to provide our volunteers with the materials and training needed in order to successfully perform their volunteer duties, such as:

- Basic work gloves (on-site)
- Volunteer Handbook
- Addendums to Volunteer Handbook for select volunteer positions
- Volunteer orientation with Saint Paul Natural Resources staff
- Training for select volunteer positions

Policies and Procedures

The following policies are in place to protect you and guarantee the success of the volunteer program. Policies and procedures unique to specific volunteer positions can be found in each volunteer position's addendum to the Volunteer Handbook.

Saint Paul Natural Resources reserves the right to terminate any volunteer who does not adhere to Saint Paul Natural Resources policies and procedures and who fails to satisfactorily perform his or her volunteer assignments.

Position Description and Hiring Requirements

Volunteers will receive a written position description which will include specific duties and responsibilities of their assignment. The Department of Parks and Recreation has been directed by the Saint Paul City Council to initiate more comprehensive screening methods for volunteers who have contact with children and vulnerable adults. Therefore, a Criminal Background Check may be required for some volunteer positions.

Volunteers 15 years and under must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. Volunteers ages 16 and 17 are required to provide a guardian consent form. Some volunteer positions have specific age requirements, which are listed on each volunteer position description.

Conduct

Non-discrimination

The City of Saint Paul will not discriminate in hiring, employment practices, volunteer recruitment, and the selection or provision of services on the basis of age, race, color, religion, gender, marital status, or sexual orientation. Volunteers must act in support of this policy so that we, above all else, create a welcoming and friendly atmosphere.

City of Saint Paul Liability

The City of Saint Paul is self-insured against liability which means that any claims are paid from its own funds, rather than by an insurance policy.

If the City is sued as a result of your actions while serving as a volunteer, the City's self-insurance policy pays the damages in most circumstances. However, the City is not required to defend you or pay your damages if you are personally sued as a result of your actions, although it may elect to do so. The City does not have insurance to cover injuries which happen to you during your volunteer work with the City.

Workplace Violence

Acts or threats of violence that create a hostile, abusive, or intimidating work environment for one or more employees or adversely affect a Saint Paul Parks and Recreation volunteer's functions are strictly prohibited.

This policy applies to all employees and all other individuals—including volunteers—on City property and to those conducting City functions while off City property.

Examples of Workplace Violence include but are not limited to the following:

- Threatening remarks to or about an individual or the individual's family or property.
- Intentional destruction or threat of destruction of City property or another person's property.
- Fighting, hitting, shoving, or throwing any object at an individual or committing any other harmful or offensive physical contact.
- Any form of communication that is harassing or threatening.
- Bullying behavior such as name calling, withholding information, or otherwise making a fellow volunteer or member of the staff or public feel uncomfortable or afraid.
- Harassing surveillance or stalking.
- Comments suggesting that violence is appropriate.
- Unauthorized possession or use of firearms or weapons of any kind on Parks and Recreation property.

Dress Code

All volunteers are to wear clothing that is neat, clean, and in good repair. To maintain neat appearance and personal safety, the following dress code guidelines apply:

- Clothing should not have excessive rips, tears or holes in them.
- No bare midriffs.
- No short shorts, low-riding pants and/or underwear on display.
- Tattoos with offensive words or graphics must be covered.
- Clothing and jewelry cannot have any reference to alcohol, sex, drugs, tobacco, gangs or violence.
- Clothing or jewelry with racist, sexist, offensive wording or graphics is prohibited.
- Closed-toe shoes must be worn at all times and be appropriate for the activity.

Alcohol and Drug Use

Consumption of alcoholic beverages and use of drugs and controlled substances while volunteering is not allowed. Volunteers may not possess alcoholic beverages, drugs, and controlled substances on their person or at volunteer work sites while volunteering.

City of Saint Paul Property

It is the policy of the City of Saint Paul that staff and volunteers cannot personally benefit from taking unauthorized possession of city property. Therefore, it is not allowed for any staff member or volunteer to remove or take into their personal possession any part of public art, garden, or other park property. This includes any items in city dumpsters and plant material in city dumps. All of these items are considered City property and may not be removed, as they will be recycled, used again as compost, or disposed of properly.

Safety

Medical Emergencies

It is recommended that you keep a simple First Aid kit in your vehicle or on your person while volunteering outside the presence of Parks and Recreation staff. If you are involved in, assist with or witness an incident, you will need to fill out a Participant/Visitor Incident Report. If you witness a citizen injury or a citizen approaches you for assistance, follow these guidelines:

- If the injury is minor and the visitor needs to clean up refer them to the nearest restroom.
- If the injury occurs at an event where Parks and Recreation staff are on site, and the injured person requires a band aid or ice pack, direct him/her to a staff member.
- If the injury is serious, immediately call 911 and report the accident.
- If you encounter a situation in which a citizen has already called 911 by cell phone, anticipate the arrival of the emergency vehicle.

Injury/Incident Reporting

Report any injury, accident, or incident that occurs while volunteering to the Volunteer Coordinator or your on-site supervisor within 24 hours. If the injury or accident is an emergency, call 911.

Additionally, you must fill out an accident/incident report.

As a volunteer, if you are injured, you are covered by Worker’s Compensation. We encourage you to seek medical assistance from the City’s designated clinic at

HealthPartners Saint Paul 205 Wabasha St S Saint Paul, MN 55107	Hours: M–F 8 am -5 pm	General Clinic 651-293-8100
	Urgent Care: M–F 5-9 pm, Sa 9 am-5 pm, Su 12-5 pm	Occupational Medicine Appointment Line 952-883-6999

If you witness or are involved in an incident, call the police immediately to report the incident and then notify the Volunteer Coordinator.

Non-emergency Police 651-291-1111

Stray Pets

If a stray pet is found in the park and there is no obvious owner, please contact **Park Security at 651-248-1732**, and they will contact Animal Control. Give them your location. Stay away from the suspected stray pet.

Severe Weather

When possible, the Volunteer Coordinator will inform volunteers of impending severe weather conditions. If a severe thunderstorm or tornado warning is in effect, go to the nearest building and stay away from glass and windows. The personal safety and well-being of volunteers/visitors is their own responsibility. Park’s open spaces are used at their own risk.

Public Disturbances

If you witness a public disturbance or a crime in progress, you should contact the police.

If you identify the situation as a non-emergency, please call the police department's non-emergency number at 651-291-1111. If you identify the situation as an emergency, call 911 immediately. **Do not approach the situation**, and always keep yourself at a safe distance and make sure you are out of harm's way.

If you have to call the police, you must fill out an accident/incident report. This report should be a brief summary of what happened so that Saint Paul Parks and Recreation may follow up with the incident, if necessary. If you have any questions, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator or other appropriate staff person.

Communication and Public Relations

Media Requests

If you are approached by a member of the media, refer them to the Public Information Officer for Parks and Recreation at 651-266-6377. Volunteers are not authorized to speak on behalf of the City of Saint Paul.

Communication Policy

As a public institution, we are bound by duty to the citizens of the City of Saint Paul and the greater Twin Cities metropolitan area. Occasionally, in the course of working in an environment such as Saint Paul Parks and Recreation, we occasionally have to manage the dissemination of facts about certain events or share information in relation to our strategic communications.

All volunteers working with Saint Paul Parks and Recreation are in positions where at times, you are privy to confidential and sensitive information. This is a trusted relationship that benefits you, the City, the parks and the public; therefore, it is crucial to respect and maintain this confidentiality, when approached by the media or other forms of the public—agencies, organizations, individuals, etc. Please do not disclose any confidential information without first speaking with the Volunteer Coordinator.

Right of Publicity

Participation in the Saint Paul Volunteer Programs shall constitute permission to use the name, likeness or any other identification of the participant in City publications and its web page without compensation to or right of prior review or approval by the participant or his/her parent or guardian (except where prohibited by law).

Cell Phones

Please do not use your cellular phone to talk, text, or use social media while volunteering. This policy is in effect in order to promote a safe and productive environment. During volunteer shifts and trainings, **all** cell phones should be put on the mute or off position and calls or texts should be limited to only those necessary so as not to distract presenters or other volunteers.

Exception: Some volunteer positions, such as Park Patrol, will carry a Volunteer Cell Phone, which will be checked out at the beginning of each volunteer shift. This cell phone should be on and used when appropriate. See further policies in the volunteer position's Volunteer Handbook Addendum.

Absences

Because volunteers help increase the capacity of Saint Paul Natural Resources staff, we rely on the completion of the duties volunteers have agreed to perform. **It is crucial to notify the Volunteer Coordinator, and in some cases, your on-site supervisor, in instances when you are not able to complete your volunteer responsibilities. Again, please contact the appropriate staff person AS SOON AS YOU KNOW you will not be able to fill your volunteer role.**

Repeated absences may result in termination. Please see termination policies below.

Conflict Resolution

If a conflict arises while volunteering with Saint Paul Natural Resources, please discuss it with the Volunteer Coordinator.

Feedback, Concerns, and Comments

If you have comments or suggestions to improve procedures in your volunteer work area or a concern about something, bring these issues to the Volunteer Coordinator or other Saint Paul Parks and Recreation staff at the earliest possible time. Volunteer feedback is welcome at any time.

Resignation

To voluntarily end your volunteer commitment with Saint Paul Natural Resources, please inform the Volunteer Coordinator as soon as possible.

Termination

The need to dismiss a volunteer is rare, but sometimes is required for the safety and protection of volunteers, staff, and citizens. These behaviors will result in mediation or immediate termination:

- Theft, misuse, destruction, or defacement of property
- Unprofessional, inappropriate behavior toward visitors, guests, other volunteers, or staff
- Working under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- Possession of weapons or illegal drugs at a volunteer work site
- Excessive tardiness or repeated unexcused absences
- Excessive failure to perform assigned or agreed upon duties.

Additionally, Saint Paul Natural Resources reserves the right to terminate any volunteer who does not adhere to Saint Paul Natural Resources policies and procedures and who fails to satisfactorily perform his or her volunteer assignments.

Volunteering with Saint Paul Natural Resources

How to Volunteer

Saint Paul Natural Resources, a unit of Saint Paul Parks and Recreation, gladly accepts both individual and group volunteers.

1. Interested individuals and groups should submit a volunteer application, which can be found on the Saint Paul Natural Resources website at www.stpaul.gov/naturalresources.
2. Individuals and group contacts will meet with the Volunteer Coordinator for a short interview to determine interests, preferences, availability, and fit.
3. Volunteers are required to sign a Volunteer Consent and Liability Waiver (Appendix A) and Volunteer Agreement (Appendix B).

Volunteer Term of Commitment

All volunteer positions, with the exception of one-time event volunteers, must agree to commit to one calendar year of service. As of December 31st of each year, your service will expire with Saint Paul Natural Resources and will need to be renewed by signing a new Volunteer Agreement.

Please see your volunteer position description for further explanations regarding terms of commitment.

Orientation and Training

All volunteers are required to complete a first-time volunteer orientation. Additionally, many volunteer positions are required to complete training specific to each volunteer position. Any training requirements are outlined in each position's volunteer handbook addendum.

- Orientations for Eco Stewards and Park Stewards will include a site visit with Saint Paul Natural Resources staff.

Scheduling Your Service

Several Saint Paul Natural Resources volunteer positions ask volunteers to perform their duties on their own time, requiring a specific number of volunteer hours per month.

Other volunteer positions take place on specific dates, and yet other volunteer positions require a set volunteer schedule.

Please review your volunteer position description and volunteer position handbook addendums for specific methods to schedule your service.

Reporting Your Hours

Reporting your volunteer hours is crucial to the volunteer program. They allow us to illustrate some of the measurable impact of the work you have done for the City. You can report your hours in two different ways.

1. Through **VicNet**, an online volunteer database.
 - a. Your email login is the same email you provided on your volunteer application.
 - b. If you've forgotten your password, you can retrieve it from VicNet.
2. You can also email your volunteer hours to Tricia Wehrle, Volunteer Coordinator, at Tricia.Wehrle@ci.stpaul.mn.us.

Please email volunteer hours and location(s) monthly. You may also submit each time you volunteer.

Recognition

Saint Paul Natural Resources is *incredibly* appreciative of our volunteers. As our volunteer program continues to grow, our recognition programs also continue to grow.

On a quarterly basis (March, June, September and December), we will feature an individual volunteer and volunteer group in our *Volunteer Spotlights* on the Saint Paul Natural Resources webpages. We feature their volunteer stories and photographs.

Appendix A: Volunteer Consent and Liability Waiver

Please print:

Volunteer/group name: _____

Position: _____

Please read and sign *each* of the following: Consent, Liability, and Right of Publicity

CONSENT

I, _____ have read, understand and agree to the above position description and volunteer contract. By my signature I declare my understanding and intent to fulfill all parts of this contract and the regulations laid out in the volunteer agreement. I agree to represent the City of Saint Paul as a volunteer with appropriate accordance to professional conduct, acting with respect and decency at all times and to all citizens.

_____ Date: _____

Signature of volunteer or group representative

LIABILITY

I agree that the City of Saint Paul shall not be liable for the payment of any wages, salary or other employment benefits to me. I am volunteering my time in exchange for the opportunity to work with the City of Saint Paul Department of Parks and Recreation. I agree that I shall be responsible for any injuries or damage incurred by me while performing volunteer services for the City of Saint Paul. I agree to waive and release the City of Saint Paul, its officers, directors, and employees from any and all claims, liabilities, losses, damages, costs, and expenses resulting from injury to me or damage to my property arising out of my volunteer duties and/or travel to or from my work site. I agree that while donating my time to the City of Saint Paul, I will not be under the influence of alcohol or drugs, unless such drugs are legally prescribed in accordance with their prescription, nor shall I undertake any activity while I am working as a volunteer which may be deemed to be illegal, immoral, contrary to public policy, or which in any way may harm, defame, or slander the good reputation of the City of Saint Paul.

_____ Date: _____

Signature of volunteer or group representative

RIGHT OF PUBLICITY

Participation in the Saint Paul Natural Resources volunteer program shall constitute permission to use the name, likeness or any other identification of the Participant in City publications and its web page without compensation to or right of prior review or approval by the Participant or his/her parent or guardian (except where prohibited by law).

_____ Date: _____

Signature of volunteer or group representative

Appendix B: Volunteer Agreement

In many ways, our volunteers are subject to the same rules and regulations as a paid employee. This is because as a volunteer you represent Saint Paul Parks and Recreation to the public. Policies and procedures are in place to protect you and guarantee the success of the volunteer program.

Please read the appropriate volunteer position description and volunteer handbook carefully. You must sign and return this agreement prior to your first volunteer shift.

By signing below, I acknowledge I have read, understand, and agree to the policies, procedures, and expectations for this volunteer position that are outlined in the Saint Paul Parks and Recreation—Natural Resources volunteer handbook and volunteer position description.

Volunteer Name (please print)

Name of Volunteer Position

Volunteer Name (signature)

Date

Appendix C: Park Sites and Addresses

Park	Address
Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary (Regional)	Commercial St. and 4th St, Saint Paul, MN
Cherokee Regional Park	700 Cherokee Heights Blvd, Saint Paul, MN 55107
Como Regional Park	1360 Lexington Pkwy N, Saint Paul, MN 55103
Crosby Farm Regional Park	2595 Crosby Farm Rd, Saint Paul, MN 55116
Desnoyer Park (Old Wagon Road)	Mississippi River Blvd, between Emerald St. SE and Eustis St.
Frost Lake Park (Community)	1421 Hoyt Ave E, Saint Paul, MN 55106
Harriet Island Park (Regional)	200 Dr. Justus Ohage Blvd, Saint Paul, MN 55102
Hidden Falls Regional Park	1415 Mississippi River Blvd. S, Saint Paul, MN 55116
Highwood Nature Preserve	748 Brookline St, Saint Paul, MN 55119
Indian Mounds Regional Park	10 Mounds Blvd, Saint Paul, MN 55106
Kellogg Mall	62 Kellogg Blvd. E, Saint Paul, MN 55101
Lilydale Regional Park	950 Lilydale Rd, Saint Paul, MN 55118
Marydale/Loeb Lake Park (Community)	542 Maryland Ave. W, Saint Paul, MN 55117
Mears Park (Community)	221 5th St. E, Saint Paul, MN 55101
North High Bridge Park (Mini Park)	476 Smith Ave, Saint Paul, MN 55102
Phalen Regional Park	1615 Phalen Dr, Saint Paul, MN 55106
Raspberry Island	2 Wabasha St, Saint Paul, MN 55107
Rice Park (Community)	109 4th St. W, Saint Paul, MN 55102
Swede Hollow Park (Community)	615 7th St. E, Saint Paul, MN 55106
West Side Bluffs	Bluffs region along Mississippi River on west side of Saint Paul

Appendix D: Regional Parks Public Hours

Parks are open from **sunrise** to **sunset** with these exceptions:

Cherokee Regional Park	Sunrise–11 pm
Como Regional Park	Sunrise–11 pm
Hidden Falls Regional Park—South Gate	Sunrise–9 pm
Hidden Falls Regional Park—North Gate	Sunrise–10 pm
Indian Mounds Regional Park	Sunrise–11 pm
Phalen Regional Park	Sunrise–11 pm

Appendix E: Contacts

In most instances, volunteers can contact the Volunteer Coordinator with any questions, concerns or feedback. However, some volunteer positions will call for volunteers to occasionally contact other Saint Paul Parks and Recreation staff or outside parties. Any contact specific to a volunteer position can be found in the corresponding volunteer position handbook addendum.

Tricia Wehrle, Volunteer Coordinator	Office: 651-632-2411 Mobile: 612-760-2239
Parks Security	651-632-2415
Non-Emergency Police	651-291-1111

Appendix F: Department Organizational Chart

Saint Paul Natural Resources is just one unit of Saint Paul Parks and Recreation, part of the Operations division.

