

## National Park Service VOLUNTEERS-IN-PARKS (VIP) UPDATE

February 2018

Mississippi National River and Recreation Area 111 E. Kellogg Blvd. Suite 105, Saint Paul, MN 55101

### IN THIS NEWSLETTER

Hello Volunteers!

February brings a few opportunities to get outside and help with habitat restoration and ice fishing events while snow is still on the ground. If you choose to volunteer for these events please make sure to dress for winter conditions. A big need for volunteers this month are individuals to help with Seed Pod classroom visits. If you enjoy gardening and working with children, this is a chance for you to help us bring a bit of summer to elementary school classrooms.

Staff at MISS and MPC are endeavoring to make it easier for you to find out about and sign up for volunteer opportunities. The MPC website now has a calendar with all current volunteer opportunities listed. When viewing the calendar, you can click on an opportunity and see all information about the event such as location, time, and the volunteer role. Additionally, if you would like to commit to the event, you can sign up right away. The contact person for specific volunteer opportunities will still be listed in this and upcoming newsletters.

\*\*\*Unless otherwise noted, please sign up for volunteer opportunities through the online scheduling tool located on the Mississippi Park Connection website (<http://parkconnection.org/volunteer/volunteer-registration/>). \*\*\*

Next month we will be using a new system to send out the Volunteer Newsletter. We would like to keep you all in the loop, so if you do not receive a newsletter in the first few days of March, please check your spam folder. Please be patient with us as we switch to this new system. Know that you can always reach out to staff with any volunteer-related questions by calling 651-293-8458 or emailing [miss\\_volunteer@nps.gov](mailto:miss_volunteer@nps.gov).

### OPPORTUNITIES

*(details follow)*

Fireside Chat 2/7

Seed Pod Classroom Leaders 2/7, 2/14, 2/20, 2/21

Family Ice Fishing 2/10

Winter Tree Identification 2/8

Snowshoe/Hike RAVE 2/17

Minneapolis STEM & Career Expo 2/21

Survival RAVE 3/3

Crew Leader Training, TBD

#### **Fireside Chat**

February 7

6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

National Park Headquarters @ Kellogg Square Apartments

Sit down with Superintendent John Anfinson and Executive Director Katie Nyberg for a cup of hot cocoa and an informal chat with your fellow park supporters! This event will be held at NPS Headquarters in downtown Saint Paul, overlooking the metro river. Discuss the current state of the Mississippi River, what's going on with the National Park Service, and what the future of parks might look like – specifically urban national parks like the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area.

**Register** by signing up [here](http://parkconnection.org)

**Contact:** Anna [awaugh@parkconnection.org](mailto:awaugh@parkconnection.org) with any questions.

**Family Ice Fishing**

February 10, 2018

9:00am - 12:00pm

Lake Rebecca in Lake Rebecca Park

415 Lock & Dam Road Hastings, MN 55033

Volunteers will help set up and take down the program site, drill holes (with an electric auger), greet participants, hand out fishing equipment, help participants with fish and bait, and untangle lines and equipment. No fishing experience or fishing license is required to assist and training is provided prior to the program. These programs are well-attended, often more than 100 people will show up, so help is very much appreciated. Participants love the adventure of getting out on the ice and you can teach them one more way to enjoy the Minnesota winter.

**Contact:** Gordon Dietzman, [gordon\\_dietzman@nps.gov](mailto:gordon_dietzman@nps.gov), 651-293-8410

**Seed Pod Classroom Leaders**

February 7, 14, 20, 21

Times vary

Local Elementary Schools

Volunteers are needed to assist with in-classroom programs for 5<sup>th</sup> grade students. We will make seed pods/balls that include native plant seeds. Next month, students will disperse these seed pods in the park. Volunteers will help set-up and take-down of materials (soil, compost, etc.) and will work alongside students to guide them through the process. No experience necessary.

**Contact:** Mary Hammes, at [mhammes@parkconnection.org](mailto:mhammes@parkconnection.org)

**Winter Tree Identification Training**

February 8

1:00pm-3:00pm

Hidden Falls Regional Park

Come learn winter tree identification skills! We will be learning how to identify different tree species by looking at buds and bark. Please dress accordingly for chilled temperatures. We will provide all materials for identification. If you have a favorite winter tree ID resource, feel free to bring it along.

If you joined us in December, please note the training will be the same. However, all are welcome to join the group and continue to practice. This will be the last training for the winter season.

Please RSVP [here](#)

**Contact:** Angela LaCroix, [alacroix@parkconnection.org](mailto:alacroix@parkconnection.org)

**Snowshoe/Hike RAVE**

Saturday, February 17

1:00pm-4:00pm

Katherine Ordway Field Station, Inver Grove Heights

Join us at a beautiful remnant prairie adjacent to the Mississippi River, for this special winter RAVE (River Action Volunteer Event). Bring your snowshoes or borrow the park's for a restoration project, followed by a guided hike to the river. Explore the river, learn about significant wildlife and cultural features, and do some good! RAVEs are great for adults and kids over 10 years old. No snowshoeing experience needed. This is a free event for volunteers – your only ticket is your service to the river!

**Please register** by signing up [here](#)

**Contact:** Mary [mhammes@parkconnection.org](mailto:mhammes@parkconnection.org) with any questions!

## **2018 MPS STEM & Career Exploration Expo**

Wednesday, February 21

8:30am-12:30pm AND/OR 12:30pm-4:30pm

Minneapolis Convention Center

This will be a great day of hands-on, interactive exhibits and inspiring conversations encouraging ALL Minneapolis Public Schools 8th grade students to build a strong academic foundation in STEM: science, math, technology, engineering, design thinking and problem-solving skills. Volunteers are needed to help staff tell kids about careers along the river and demonstrate the use of turbidity tubes. Lunch is available to folks who sign up for the full day.

**Contact:** Mary Hammes at [mhammes@parkconnection.org](mailto:mhammes@parkconnection.org)

## **Survival RAVE**

Saturday, March 3

1:00pm-4:00pm

Hidden Falls Regional Park, North Entrance

Participants will be helping to restore the floodplain by hauling brush and spreading native seeds.

This RAVE will challenge your outdoor skills (though no experience or previous knowledge is required).

You'll learn what it takes to make it outdoors in a Minnesota winter! Do some good while helping us to celebrate service and our most special places – national parks! RAVes are great for adults and kids over 10 years old. This is a free event for volunteers – your only ticket is your service to the river!

**Register** by signing up [here](#).

**Contact:** Mary [mhammes@parkconnection.org](mailto:mhammes@parkconnection.org) with any questions!

## **Crew Leader Training**

Spring 2018, Date TBD

Location TBD

Are you interested in stepping up your game as a volunteer? Would you like to lead others in habitat restoration events? We are looking for volunteer crew leaders for the 2018 season. Volunteer crew leaders commit to attending a few large group habitat restoration events per month, April through October. At events, volunteer crew leaders assist general volunteers in plant identification, invasive species removal and planting techniques. Crew leaders are models for safety and strong work ethics – as a crew leader, you can inspire others to become stewards of the Mississippi River!

**Please Contact:** Mary Hammes with a note of interest in being a crew leader for 2018 or with any questions about the volunteer position. [mhammes@parkconnection.org](mailto:mhammes@parkconnection.org) or 651-291-9119.

## **Mississippi Park Connection**

Mississippi Park Connection is the charitable partner of Mississippi National River and Recreation Area. Mississippi Park Connection is committed to preserving, protecting, and enjoying the Mississippi River, the national park that runs through the Twin Cities. Among many things, we work closely together (we even share office space) to operate our joint volunteer program. Learn more at <http://parkconnection.org/>

*Karen Katz, Park Ranger, Mississippi National River and Recreation Area*

*111 Kellogg Blvd. East, Suite 105, St. Paul, MN 55101-1256, 651-293-8458*

---

**This is the volunteer newsletter** for the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area, a national park unit located in the Twin Cities. The monthly newsletter details volunteer opportunities for the given month. If you are interested in an opportunity or have questions, contact the person listed. If nothing fits your

interest or availability, don't worry, next month brings new opportunities! To volunteer, unsubscribe, or for more information contact [miss\\_volunteer@nps.gov](mailto:miss_volunteer@nps.gov) or (651) 293-8458. Please circulate freely to interested parties.