



The Volunteer

Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore's Volunteer in Parks Newsletter

December 2009

The Science and Art of Environmental Education



By: Kyle Good, Volunteer Naturalist Intern

It's almost been a year since I found myself diving head first into a geography internship with the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore in the cold month of January as a second semester college freshman. Personally, I was speechless when everything fell into place almost as if I felt a natural conviction to embark on this endeavor. Now I look back at the decision to call and sign-up as one of the best things I have ever done in my life.

Teaching children, students, and the public the geologic, biologic and historical importance of

the park environment is a whole lot of fun. "Where is the fun?" some might ask. It's in seeing a student or a visitor's reaction to the first time they tap their own maple tree during Maple Sugar Time or see how the Pottawatomis traded valuable items for the goods of the fur traders. It is in seeing their reaction after climbing the sand dunes at West Beach or Mount Baldy and getting a clear look at the surrounding landscape and Chicago for the first time. These simple intangible rewards at the end of the day are more rewarding than a couple of academic credits. They tell you, "I may have just inspired a young student to want to grow up and study animals, or the earth, or biology." That's the true reward in the science and art of environmental education.

So what interpretive hikes and talks are worth going to? All of them, but if you don't have the time to go on all of the tours and talks, visit two of my personal favorite places in the park: Pinhook Bog and Miller Woods. While a visit to Pinhook Bog must be on one of the open house days listed in The Singing Sands, the reward is stepping into what is one of the most truly wild and unusual habitats existing in Northwest Indiana and worth the trip. You can visit Miller Woods at all times of the year. It's one of the many places in the park that you can visit and see such dramatic change between the seasons and its one of the most biologically diverse sites in Indiana. Make an effort to visit the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore. It is everybody's park.

Thank You 2009 Volunteers

In fiscal year 2009, 1457 volunteers contributed 30,127 hours to the National Park Service at Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore. The greatest effort was the National Park Service/ National Geographic BioBlitz with over 14,000 volunteer hours including the 24 hours of the event and the time scientists, teachers and logistics volunteers contributed preparing for the big day.

We would like to say thank you to all our volunteers with our 2010 Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore calendar. To ensure we have the correct mailing address, if you would like a calendar, please e-mail your address to [Lynda Lancaster@nps.gov](mailto:Lynda_Lancaster@nps.gov), or call (219)392-1682 and leave your name and address.

Thanks to all for all your work all year long!





Volunteering and the IRS

By Lynda Lancaster Volunteer Program Manager

This past year the Internal Revenue Service conducted an audit of the National Park Service's Volunteer –In- Parks program. The IRS determined that volunteer reimbursements could be taxable income and must be reported in order to be in compliance with IRS policy. Some long standing VIP reimbursements are considered taxable and it is now clear that some reimbursements must be reported on your W2 or IRS Form 1099-MISC. There is some difference for volunteers who are traveling as part of their volunteer duties, and if you are asked to be in travel status to volunteer for Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore we will provide that information to you. For the majority of our volunteers the following are taxable:

- Mileage reimbursements at a rate above \$.14 per mile
 - If you receive more than 14 cents a mile as reimbursement for travel, the park will generate a 1099-MISC and you must report the reimbursement above the \$.14/mile as income on your annual tax return.
- Reimbursement for a pre-determined flat rate
 - In the past, volunteers would receive a flat per day reimbursement. Again, you would need to fill out a W2 and the park will have to generate a 1099-MISC so that this can be reported as income.
- Reimbursement without receipts
 - Any reimbursement you receive for items without a receipt must be reported on your W-2 or 1099-MISC as income on your annual tax return. For example, if you requested to be reimbursed for a tool used in a program and you do not have a receipt for that tool, the reimbursement would be considered income and would have to be reported to the IRS.
- Reimbursements for meals when food is readily available.
 - It has been determined that if you start off at your house before you come to do your volunteer duties, then food is considered readily available. You can bring food from home.
- Non-monetary awards or gifts of value above acceptable amounts.
 - It has been determined that a non-monetary award valued at no more than \$50 is an acceptable amount. For example, a \$25 book given to a volunteer as an award for outstanding service would not have to be reported as income on your taxes.

This is the policy as we understand it now. That may change. Stay tuned.



We need some help at the Visitor Centers

If you can help contact:

[Kipton Walton@nps.gov](mailto:Kipton_Walton@nps.gov) or 219-938-8221 to help at the Douglas Center for Environmental Education in Miller

[Ryan Koepke@nps.gov](mailto:Ryan_Koepke@nps.gov) or 219-395-8908 to help at the Visitor Center in Porter



The Volunteer
for Comments contact VIP program manager Lynda Lancaster at
219-395-1682 or Lynda_Lancaster@nps.gov

Maple Sugar Time Volunteers Needed

Even though the first snow has not yet hit us, it is already time to get our Maple Sugar Time volunteers ready! Ted Winterfeld is the MST volunteer coordinator this year. Ted is asking volunteers to have their application in to him by February 5th so he can get started putting the schedule together.

To keep the program safe and accurate, all MST volunteers will have to attend one of the training sessions. Ted is working with Kathy Wilder to help this year's training be more kid friendly. Please contact [Ted Winterfeld@nps.gov](mailto:Ted.Winterfeld@nps.gov) or 219-395-1661 for questions about volunteering for the MST public programs.



Maple Sugar Time Education Programs 2010 by

Christy Gerlach



The Maple Sugar Time program for school groups is being planned now and we need your help. School group programs will run for six days over two consecutive weeks on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, March 10, 11, 12 and 17, 18, 19.

We need five volunteers each day for the best educational experience. Of particular importance are the fire keeping sites at the pre-contact / Pottawatomie site, the pioneer site, and the sugar shack. These sites must have a fire keeper, or there can be no fire.

Also in the fire keeper department, we need

someone cooking on the wood-burning stove in the kitchen each day and an additional one to two people showing students through the remaining rooms of the house and offering a taste of maple syrup.

If you would like to sign up to volunteer for these days, please call me at the Douglas Center for Environmental Education (219) 938-8221,(preferred method). If you do not reach me, leave a message and I will call you back. You can e-mail me at Christine_gerlach@nps.gov, please leave a phone number where I can reach you.

If you are interested in sites you have not done before, you will be given the information you need along with the educational objectives as part of your training. In addition, each school group volunteer will receive a copy of the material sent to teachers. Maple Sugar Time is a popular program with schools and we have already scheduled several schools for March. I will know what additional grades to expect as the winter leaves us and we get closer to March.

The volunteers we need each day for the best educational experience are:

Pre-contact site: = 1

Bus Greeter site = 1

House Cook site = 1

Pioneer site = 1

House Helper = 1-2

Sugar Shack = 1-2

I hope to see a lot of you this year. Volunteers help make this a successful program.

Thanks in advance for your help.

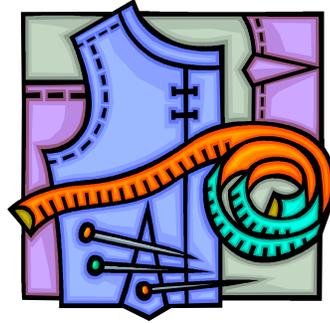


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Costume Workshop: January 9, 2009 Cowles Lodge starting at 9:00a.m.

On January 9th there will be a workshop on what can be worn as a costume for interpretive programs at Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore. The workshop will be followed by a sewing party to make costume parts! The workshop will start at 9:00 a.m. at the Dunes Learning Center's Cowles Lodge.

Contact Kim by e-mail at Kimberly_Swift@nps.gov or call (219)395-1622 to let her know you are coming and for more information.



Stewardship Days a GREAT way to Volunteer!



Spend a morning learning about the park and at the same time lend a hand on a stewardship projects. Check the park newspaper, *The Singing Sands*, for dates and locations. Bring a friend or two with you!

Go to: Volunteer.gov/gov

for ways you can volunteer at your national park

Interested in Learning more about Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore?

A long time volunteer in the park noted that she does not get to locations beyond where she spends her time volunteering. She wanted to learn more about the rest of the park. Since she is interested we thought other volunteers might be as well.

- What parts of the park would you like to see in a volunteer tour?
- Would a weekday or weekend day work better?
- Is there a specific topic you would like to hear more about?

Please send your requests to Lynda_Lancaster@nps.gov or call (219)395-1682. Please leave a message.

Save the date:



Mini Bioblitz for the Birds May 8 2009

As part of International Migratory Bird Day Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore and partners will conduct a bioblitz limited to counting birds.

Be on the lookout for more information.



32nd Annual Maple Sugar Time Volunteer Application

PLEASE RESPOND BY WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 5th

SPECIAL NOTE: Every volunteer must attend one of the following, please select one.

_____ **Saturday, Feb. 20, 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.** – Training/Review - Meet at the Bailly Ranger Station

_____ **Wednesday, Feb. 24, 6:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.** – Training/Review - Meet at the Bailly Ranger Station

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Please send my schedule via (Circle one) E-mail Paper Mail Phone

Best time(s) I can be reached if we have questions _____

I have volunteered for Maple Sugar Time _____ (years).

Note: It is often wet/muddy/slushy and on uneven surfaces, please wear appropriate footwear.

Volunteering for Maple Sugar Time Weekends

I can work: March 6th ___ March 7th ___ March 13th ___ March 14th ___

Number as many choices below with 1 being first choice

___ **Saturday, February 20 at 9:00 – noon** - MST workday, setting-up the sugar bush and shack please meet at Bailly/Chellberg Parking lot

___ **Greeting the Public** - greeting arriving visitors; give information, information booth 9:30am – 4:00pm

___ **A.M. Tour Greeter/organizer** - greeting a.m. tour visitors and organizing next tour time 9:30am – noon

___ **Visitor Center** - assist with Bailly/Chellberg visitor center operations 10:00am – 4:30pm

___ **Pre-metal/Native American site** - maintain fire & boil sap using log & rocks method 9:30am – 4:30am

___ **Pioneer (kettle) site** - maintain fire & boil sap using kettle method

___ **Drilling Posts Site** - demonstrate tapping process: brace, bit, spiles, and buckets. Help visitors to try

___ **Sugar Shack-Evaporator Operator** - maintain fire & boil sap in the sugar shack

___ **Tour/Trail Conclusion** - syrup tasting-fill cups and distribute to visitors

___ **Interpret House** - importance of the different rooms and uses during late winter

___ **Interpret Kitchen Life** – wood stove, water, used of maple syrup & sugar

___ **Logistics** – gather sap, move wood, etc (Public Weekends) 10:00 – 4:00

**Please see other side for more MST Volunteer opportunities ----->
VOLUNTEERING AT MST IS FUN AND LOTS OF HELP IS NEEDED!**

Note: It is often wet/muddy/slushy and on uneven surfaces, please wear appropriate footwear.

- Distribute flyers** - pick-up MST flyers at VC and distribute to area businesses
 Collecting sap February 20th through March 19th (circle) Su. M. Tu. W. Th. F. Sa. I will call the MST Volunteer Hotline (219-396-1852) or Please call me hours/days before I am needed.
 I can help wash buckets and tubs after MST.

Volunteering For Maple Sugar Time *School Programs*

March 10, 11, 12, 17, 18 and 19

I am able to work (circle dates):

MARCH

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri
		10	11	12
		17	18	19

School programs run from 9:00 a.m. - 2:45 p.m.

The time you are needed depends on activities assigned.

We will try to schedule your preferred activities.

Number as many choices as you would like with 1 being first choice

- greeting school buses upon arrival
 Native American site (Tending the fire)
 Pioneer site (kettles, tending the fires)
 working at the sugar shack
 greeting children/providing house tour/filling maple syrup cups
 cooking on woodburning stove inside house
 assistant cook (great learning experience)
 Logistics (moving firewood, etc.)

Skip the Stamp, Sign-up by February 5, 2010

You Can Sign Up by Email, Paper Mail, or Phone

Email (ted_winterfeld@nps.gov) - Phone Your Response to Voice Mail (219-395-1852)

or Paper mail to: Ted Winterfeld
Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore
1100 North Mineral Springs Road
Porter, IN 46304-1299

Questions:

Public Weekends/Training/Sap Collection ted_winterfeld@nps.gov or 219-395-1661

School Programs christy_gerlach@nps.gov or 219-938-8221



Thank You For Volunteering!

