



The Volunteer

Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore's Volunteer in Parks Newsletter

December 2011

All Aboard the Wolverine!

By J.P. Anderson



This year Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore joined the nationwide Trails & Rails program. The program hosts National Park Service representatives, predominately volunteers, on select Amtrak train routes. Volunteers jump onboard and provide information about the scenery, especially as the train passes through a national park. In our case, specially trained volunteers interpret the local natural resource, heritage-based history, and issues for rail passengers along the route. The Amtrak trains, the Wolverine 352 and 353, run from Chicago's Union Station to Niles, Michigan and back. This year volunteers presented 30 programs including a special program for the

Boys & Girls Club/Amtrak, and had its very own Junior Ranger activity page.

November 16, during an administrative meeting at Chicago's Union Station, our very own volunteer Paul Clusen received a special token of appreciation from Southwest Regional Director David Vela for both his dedicated efforts towards the new Wolverine program and his time of service.

There are currently 18 volunteers in the Trails & Rails program. We were very fortunate to have a group of interested volunteers from a discontinued Trails & Rails program to select from for this new program.



Paul Clusen and Regional Director David Vela

East Side, West Side All round the Park

Have you met Volunteer Sue Burns? She is a very important part of the Douglas Center operations these days especially during the Saturday Open House from 1:00-3:00 p.m. Stop in and you are likely to find her in the animal room keeping the animal homes clean, or sharing her knowledge and love of animals with curious kids of all ages. Sue not only helps set up and tear down the activities for the event, but she participates by facilitating one of the most popular activities of the open house--feeding the animals in the animal room. Sue is always willing to assist at our special events, too, such as the Douglas Center 25th Anniversary and the 2011 Winterfest.



Sue Burns battling bittersweet

You can usually find Sue lending a hand with her bright pink gloves at Stewardship days. Sue is a great asset here at Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore and always willing to help where needed. Visitors and staff appreciate her smiling nature, and her love of the park is contagious. Come and see for yourself.

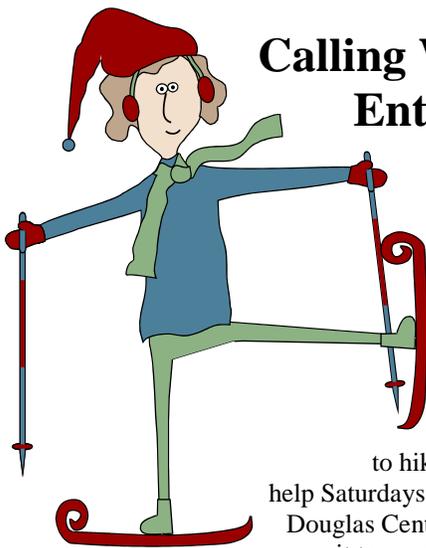


Pat Majak points out national lakeshore highlights

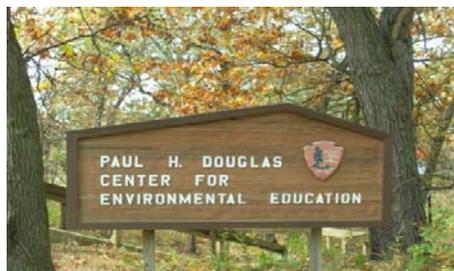
You will be hard pressed to find someone who knows more about the best parts of Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore than Volunteer Pat Majak! Pat has been volunteering at the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore Visitor Center for over 6 years. She loves to tell visitors how they can enjoy the lakeshore. Pat greets everyone who comes into the visitor center with a wonderful smile and has all the time people need to get oriented and plan a delightful day at the dunes no matter what the weather.

The national lakeshore visitor center, located at 1215 N. State Road 49 in Porter, Indiana, is open 365 days a year and the winter hours are 8:30 am - 4:30pm seven days a week. **If you have a love for the park, would like to share that**

love, and have some weekly free time, we could sure use your help. Contact JP Anderson at 219-395-1848 or fill out the application on line at www.nps.gov/volunteer.gov/gov. Click the state of Indiana and select "Information Desk Assistant" to apply.



Calling Winter Enthusiasts:



Do you love to ski and snowshoe, or maybe you have always wanted to learn? **The Douglas Center for Environmental Education needs volunteers to assist with our informal skiing and snowshoeing program on Saturdays throughout the winter.**

Throughout the day, (9 a.m.-4 p.m.) the park checks out skis and snowshoes free of charge to visitors to use on the Miller Woods trail. We need volunteers to assist with the check-in and check-out process. If your skill level allows, volunteers are needed to hike or ski the trails to assist folks who might need help. If you prefer indoor activities, we could use

help Saturdays with craft activities for younger visitors and even staffing the front desk to greet visitors. The Douglas Center is really hopping on Saturdays now, so we could always use a helping hand. Volunteers need not commit to every Saturday or even a full day, but we can work with you to set up a regular schedule. If interested

or if you have questions, please contact Julie Larsen at 219-395-1821 or by e-mail at julianne_larsen@nps.gov.



Volunteer.gov/gov

Looking for a service project for your school, scout or community group? We are looking for you. Check Volunteer.gov/gov to sign up for volunteer projects at Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore.





Volunteering and the IRS

All the time and effort a volunteer gives is appreciated, but is it tax deductible? 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.

Frog Monitoring Training

February 22, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. Indiana Dunes State Park Nature Center



Soon the sun will come back and it will be spring! In partnership with the Field Museum and Shirley Heinze Land Trust, you can help monitor the earliest signs of spring throughout Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore. Start by attending a Frog Monitor Training workshop. One of several in the Calumet Region will be held Wednesday February 22, 2012 at 7:00p.m. Drop a note to Jim Erdelac at volunteer@heinzetrust.org, to reserve your seat.



Volunteers Needed 2012 Maple Sugar Time



Dear Prospective Volunteer,

Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore's 34th annual Maple Sugar Time (March 3, 4, 10, and 11) and the associated school programs are right around the corner. We invite you to participate in this year's program. Maple Sugar Time is a celebration of the evolution of maple sugaring in Northwest Indiana and its effects on the land and people's lives. We hope you are excited to be a part of this wonderful historic and seasonal event.

The Maple Sugar Trail takes visitors past five stops that demonstrate how sugaring changed/evolved over time. The stops include:

Pre-contact American Indian Site – Shows how American Indians would have made maple sugar. This stop interprets maple sugar making before contact with Europeans.

Metal Kettle Site – Shares the process and importance of sugaring to pioneers who used maple sugar as a yearly source of a locally available sweetener.

Drilling Posts Site – This stop provides visitors with a hands-on activity to give them an idea of the work involved in tapping trees. We encourage visitors to drill into and attach sap collecting spiles and buckets to wooden posts rather than real trees.

Sugar Shack 1900–1930s Site - Explain how and why the Chellbergs made syrup.

Chellberg Farmhouse Site - Staffed by well-trained volunteer interpreters in official VIP uniform. It gives visitors a chance to warm up, to taste pure maple syrup (and compare it to imitation maple syrup), and to learn how to use maple sugar products in cooking. In addition, it provides a brief look into rural life around 1900.



Your time spent volunteering is deeply appreciated by the national lakeshore staff and the park visitor. Without your efforts, there would not be a program of this quality. Please use the MST volunteer sign-up sheet and follow the instructions to join in on the fun.



2012 Maple Sugar Time - Volunteer Sign-up Sheet

PLEASE RESPOND BY WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 8th

SPECIAL NOTE: Everyone needs to attend one of the following, please select one.

- _____ **Saturday, February 18 at 9:00 – noon** –workday to set-up- meet at Bailly/Chellberg Parking lot
_____ **Wednesday, February 22 at 1:00 p.m.** –Training/Review - Meet at the Indiana Dunes Training Room
_____ **Wednesday, February 22 at 7:00 p.m.** –Training/Review - Meet at the Indiana Dunes Training Room

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

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

Best time(s) park staff can reach you if they have questions about your application _____

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 3rd _____ March 4th _____ March 10th _____ March 11th _____
Number as many choices below with 1 being first choice

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

___ **Tour Greeter/Organizer** - greeting a.m. tour visitors and organizing tour times (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 – 4:30pm)

___ **Pioneer (kettle) site** - maintain fire & boil sap using kettle method (9:30am – 4:30pm)

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

___ ***Sugar Shack-Evaporator Operator** - maintain fire & boil sap in sugar shack; *special training required

___ **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, uses of maple syrup & sugar

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

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.

Continued on the next page



- Distribute flyers** - pick-up MST flyers at VC and distribute to area businesses
- Collecting sap** - February 21 through March 13 (circle) Su. M. Tu. W. Th. F. Sa. I will call the MST Volunteer Hotline (219-395-1848) 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 Tuesday, March 6 – Friday, March 9, 2012

I am able to work (circle dates):

MARCH			
Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri
06	07	08	09

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 below as you like and number one is your 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.)

Please sign-up by February 8, 2012

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

Email (jean-pierre_anderson@nps.gov) - Phone your response to voice mail (219-395-1848) or paper mail to:

J.P. Anderson
Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore
1100 North Mineral Springs Road
Porter, IN 46304-1299

Have questions??? (For weekend days), please call J.P Anderson at 219-395-1848; (For weekday school programs), please call Christy Gerlach at 219-395-1885.



Thank You For Keeping Historic Sites Alive



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