

The Volunteer

Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore's Volunteer in Parks Newsletter

December 2012

Volunteers Donate 30,133 hours to Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore in 2012



Whew, what a year! Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore Volunteers were busy all around the park, and 30,133 hours were reported to Washington to prove it.

The Division of Interpretation and Education saw volunteers donating 11,411 hours to Rails & Trails, Century of Progress Open House, Maple Sugar Time, ParKids, Visitor Center, and Family day at the Douglas Center.

In addition Ranger Ted Winterfeld and a bunch of resource management rangers led a small army of volunteers out in the park for almost 2000 hours during Stewardship Days. These volunteers removed invasive plants, planted native plants and helped get ready for park events.



Some of the younger volunteers came out from Steuben County Literacy Collation to launch the Great Lakes Jr. Ranger Program. The trip to the park was the culmination of a yearlong literacy project for the Literacy Coalition, the EPA, Ranger Marcus Key and the Great Lakes Research and Education Center. The team brought 175 K-12 students from rural Steuben County to the park where many of them got to see Lake Michigan for the first time. They participated in a variety of service projects and all received their Jr. Ranger Badges.



It was not only Stewardship Days that kept resource management volunteers busy. Volunteers working with the park staff, including Master Volunteer* Mark Montgomery and Student Conservation Association volunteers, planted about 46,000 tender little wetland and prairie plants contributing about 25% of the total of 183,000 plants put into the bogs, fens, prairies and meadows in the park this year. Two hard working SCA Crews contributed almost 9,000 hours to the park. They brought an international perspective to their work with two student volunteers from Japan.

Folks in Cultural Resources were busy working on an archaeological expedition with the Midwest Archeological Center, and the University of Notre Dame. Ranger Judy

Collins led a group from the Art Institute to document some of the historic architecture that can be found here.

Maintenance saw some great projects completed with volunteer assistance. An SCA crew built a very nice bridge on the Dunewood Trail, and Anthony Sutphen and his volunteers were working all over the park on a wide variety of projects totaling 3,800 hours.



Our intrepid Campground hosts were out for 3,104 hours helping folks in the campground find their way around, find a place to stay and learn how to have a safe visit.

Volunteers on our "snail mail" list got a letter asking for their preference on receiving the Volunteer. Our snail mail mailing list went from over 300 to just 20, greatly reducing the paper we use for our newsletter. Thanks for helping the park reduce our carbon footprint.

We are looking forward to working with you in 2013. How can we help make your volunteer experience better?

Drop me an e-mail, or a letter, or give me a call.

Lynda.Lancaster@nps.gov (219)395-1682

The park would just not be the same without all the volunteers, not only for the work you do, but because we just love to see your smiling faces.

*A Master Volunteer commits to volunteer 500 hours annually.

Signs up!

You may have noticed some new signs around the park. Not only are they handsome, they help visitors understand where they are as they move around Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore.

You may have also noticed a couple of name changes. These changes rename portions of the park to reflect the amazing diversity found in this part of Northwest Indiana. The new names reflect what a hiker can expect to find when they venture down the trail.

Taken as a whole, the Tolleston Dunes area, Calumet Dune Trail, and Glenwood Dune Trail will help visitors better understand the geological and geographic resources of Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore. The new names also illustrate why the founders of the national park chose areas inland from the shore for protection and inclusion within the park boundaries.



For more information check out the press release, which can be found along with all our other press releases at:

<http://www.nps.gov/indu/parknews/newsreleases>.



Share the Experience Photo Contest



National Park Service permanent, term, seasonal employees and **volunteers** can show off their photos of NPS and other federal recreational lands by entering the first-ever “Share the Experience Employee Photo Contest.”

Here's your chance to share all of the great photos you have taken on federal recreational lands. Enter up to five photos **by December 31st** to be eligible to win.

Ten winners will be selected to receive an America the Beautiful – National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Annual Pass. The grand prize winner will also receive a framed version of his or her photo and a copy will be presented to the appropriate agency leadership.

Employees and volunteers of the National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, USDA Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, National Archives, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers are eligible for the contest. Photos must be taken on lands managed by these agencies.

Go to <http://sharetheexperience.recreation.gov/home> to enter. For more information contact Brooke Linford at (202) 513-7139 or brooke_linford@nps.gov.





Birding Calls for the 113th Christmas Bird Count

The 113th Christmas Bird Count will take place from December 14, 2012 through January 5, 2013. Tens of thousands of volunteers throughout the Americas take part in an adventure that has become a family tradition among generations. Families, students, birders, and scientists armed with binoculars, bird guides and checklists go out on an annual mission – some before dawn.

Become a citizen scientist! Brave the snow, wind, or rain, and lead novice birders or follow along with an experienced birder and take part in the Christmas Bird Count. Help make an enormous contribution to conservation. Audubon and other organizations use data collected in this longest-running wildlife census to assess the health of bird populations - and to help guide conservation action.

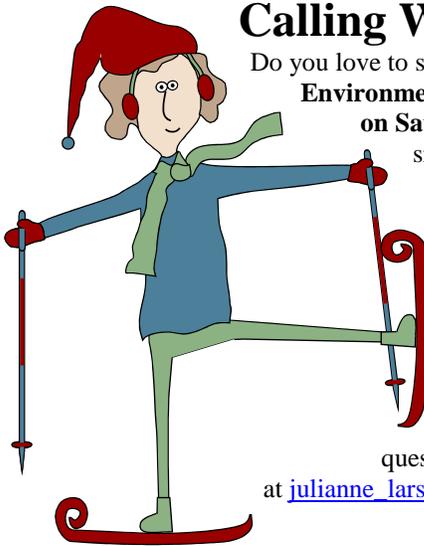


For the second year, Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore will participate in the newly formed **Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore West birding circle on Thursday, December 27th**. You must be registered for your count to count.

To register, contact Ranger Christine Gerlach. She can be reached by email at christine_gerlach@nps.gov or phone (219) 395-1885.

All Audubon counters must be registered with Christy by Friday, December 21st.

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, and 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.



Don't wait, more Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore Volunteer

Opportunities can be found at www.Volunteer.gov.

Click on the State of Indiana and then pick the project that most interests you. We look forward to seeing you in the park.





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.

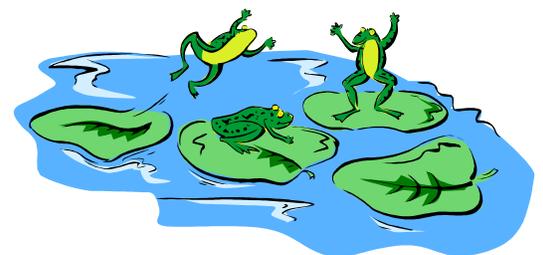
Frog Monitoring Training



February 27, 2013, at 7:00 p.m. Indiana Dunes State Park Nature Center

Soon the sun will come back and all those amorous amphibians will be looking for a date. With a little practice you too can tell the difference between a Chorus Frog and Spring Peeper, just by their love song! In partnership with the Field Museum and Shirley

Heinze Land Trust, we could use your help to 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 27, 201, at 7:00p.m. Drop a note to Jim Erdelac at volunteer@heinzetrust.org, to hop to it!



Volunteers Needed for 2013 Maple Sugar Time

Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore's 35th annual Maple Sugar Time or MST is March 2, 3, 9 and 10, 2013 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 5 stops that demonstrate how sugaring changes/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 spiles and buckets to wooden posts rather than onto 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.

If you have questions please contact me, JP Anderson at [Jean-Pierre Anderson@nps.gov](mailto:Jean-Pierre_Anderson@nps.gov) or give me a call at (219)395-1848.



2013 Maple Sugar Time - Volunteer Sign-up Sheet

PLEASE RESPOND BY WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 6th for the general public programs

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

- _____ **Saturday, February 16 at 9:00 – noon** -MST workday, setting-up the sugar bush and shack please meet at Bailly/Chellberg Parking lot
- _____ **Wednesday, February 20 at 1:00 p.m.** –Training/Review - Meet at the Indiana Dunes Training Room
- _____ **Wednesday, February 20 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) 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 General Public Program on the Weekends Volunteer Supervisor is JP Anderson

I can work: March 2nd _____ March 3rd _____ March 9th _____ March 10th _____

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, used 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.

___ **Distribute flyers** - pick-up MST flyers at VC and distribute to area businesses

___ **Collecting sap** - February 19 through March 11 (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 Volunteer Supervisor is Christy Gerlach

(School Programs run Friday, March 1 – Friday, March 8, 2013)

I am able to work (circle dates):

	MARCH				
	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
School programs run from 9:00 a.m. - 2:45 p.m.					01
The time you are needed depends on activities assigned.	04	05	06	07	08
We will try to schedule your preferred activities.					

Number as many choices below 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.)
-

Please sign-up for school programs by February 8, 2013

How to sign up?

**Email (jean-pierre_anderson@nps.gov) OR 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 Your Historic Sites Alive!

