

Indiana Dunes National Park Volunteer Service Description



Trail Crew

Position Overview

Trail Crew members work to enhance and protect the trail system in several ways. Trail Crew members monitor the trail system for hazards such as fallen trees, excess erosion, boardwalk and bridge damage, and check trail signs and other markings for damage.

Trail Crew members can also work on the invasive species early detection program in conjunction with National Park Service personnel. This program provides ongoing monitoring along trails and roadsides of the national park where new invasive plant outbreaks often occur. Discovering invasives before they become well established is critical to reducing damage to ecosystem integrity, preventing the loss of habitat for rare plants and animals, and preventing costly natural resource management.

Minimum Commitment

Conduct a minimum of one hike per month year-round (ideally).

Goal / Outcome of Job:

The Trail Crew program offers the opportunity to work in conjunction with National Park Service personnel to enhance and protect our trail system.

Description of Duties

- Conduct a minimum of one hike per month year-round (ideally).
 - Document trail hazards such as downed trees, excessive erosion, damaged boardwalks, etc.
 - Document damaged or missing trail signs.
 - Take photos of trail hazards and damage to help maintenance staff.
 - Submit an email trail report (positive or negative) to Trail Crew supervisor after each hike.
 - Remove litter.
 - Remove sticks and other small debris from the trail.
 - Optional: Ensure the trailhead kiosks are stocked with trail maps.
 - Optional: Perform basic trail maintenance using loppers and handsaws (training required).
 - Optional: Participate in trail stewardship workdays.

- Optional: Participate in invasive plant identification and data collection.
 - Assist Park staff in trail and roadside invasive plant monitoring and mapping.
 - Monitor and submit reports (positive or negative) at least three times per growing season.
 - Take effective photos of potential invasive species sightings.

- Enter data into the Great Lakes Early Detection Network (GLEDN).
- Follow all park guidelines.
 - Use all personal protective gear (including tick prevention).
 - Ensure that all tools, equipment, vehicles, and other co-workers are working safely.
 - If you find anything that you think might be an archeological artifact, please leave it in place. Please do not pick it up or disturb it. Instead, take a photograph and document the location of the piece and then notify the park.
 - Never approach others engaged in illegal behavior. Call 1-800-PARK-TIP for all emergencies and to report a crime.

Knowledge/ Skills Desired

- Knowledge of Indiana Dunes region flora and/or have a willingness to learn.
- The ability to work with a diverse community of volunteers and park staff.
- Knowledge and understanding of the National Park Service mission and goals.
- Possess good written and verbal communication skills.
- Possess ability to use photos and verbal / written communication to describe the location and details of trail conditions and invasive species.
- Understand and respect all park regulations and policies.
- Ability to photograph potential invasive species.
- Desire and ability to work outdoors.
 - Ability to work in inclement weather.
 - Ability to work in diverse terrain and footing.
 - Ability to handle some strenuous physical activity.

Difficulty

Average impact. Requires hiking in various conditions.

Working Conditions:

Work is mainly performed outdoors in hilly terrain near the shores of Lake Michigan in all extremes of weather. Conditions range from hot, dry, and dusty to foggy, damp, and rainy to wintertime snow. There is frequent exposure to poison ivy, sun, wind, rain, uneven terrain, mud, biting insects, and ticks. Ground footing can vary from loose sand to slippery clay, to mud.

Training / Preparation Required:

- Mandatory safety training will be provided. Trail Crew members will be issued personal protective equipment as needed.
- If a Trail Crew member observes a violation which they feel requires a law enforcement response, they should never approach person(s) engaged in the illegal behavior. When at a safe location, call 1-800-PARK-TIP to report the situation.
- Informational contact with visitors may be made at the discretion of the Trail Crew member based on their level of comfort.

Uniform

Trail Crew members will be provided with a National Park Service volunteer uniform. These items are to be worn while on duty.

