Festival of the Sugar Maples

Volunteers Needed
Two Weekends March 2 & 3, 9 & 10

No experience is needed to help at this fun annual outdoor event at Coral Woods—we will train you! Volunteers should enjoy interacting with the public, be comfortable being outdoors, and be able to walk over uneven, sometimes icy or snow-covered trails.

Contact the Volunteer Coordinator to...

Sign up for the Training Workshop:
Saturday, Feb. 23, 9 a.m.–Noon. New tour leaders and first-time volunteers will start off the workshop with a hearty pancake breakfast and then learn all they need to know about the history and techniques of maple sugaring and tree-tapping.

Choose your position:
Tour leader, tree tapping demonstrator, historical station presenter or sugar house assistant.

Choose your shift:
Volunteer shifts are available Saturdays & Sundays, March 2 & 3, 9 & 10 from 9:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

Looking for a Great Reason to Get Outdoors? Volunteer!

BLUEBIRD & BUTTERFLY MONITORS help species thrive.
EDUCATION volunteers assist with programs and events.
GROUP PROJECTS for community and corporate groups.
HISTORICAL VOLUNTEERS bring our local history to life at the Powers-Walker House and education programs.
PLANTS OF CONCERN volunteers monitor rare native plant populations.
SWEEP volunteers help keep our parks and trails safe.

Interested? Contact the Volunteer Coordinator:
(815) 338-6223, ext. 1201 • Volunteers@MCCDistrict.org

Hey! Eagle Scout Candidates—Looking for a project? After April 1, contact the Volunteer Coordinator for the 2019 project list.

Stay Connected…

Join us on Facebook

Join our Volunteer Facebook Groups to find out about important dates, upcoming training opportunities and to share your photos and experiences.
2018 VOLUNTEER SURVEY RESULTS

Last fall we emailed out a volunteer survey to our 350+ registered District volunteers. Thank you to the volunteers who responded to our survey. Your input is important to us and helps us better understand why you volunteer and provided us with insight on how improve your volunteer experience with the District.

We had a 28% response rate (considered above average), with a total of 98 responses.

The survey asked volunteers why they volunteer, how satisfied they were with volunteering, what they liked and disliked about volunteering with us, and any suggested changes.

Overall our volunteers are involved with the Conservation District because they like giving back to the community, being part of something bigger, sharing their passion for conservation with others, being outdoors, taking care of the environment and see it as an opportunity to continue to learn new things and meet new people.

- 93% responded that they are very satisfied or satisfied with their volunteer experience.
- 29% responded with “no issues”.
- 28% responded with communication as an issue, which included poor responses, and both too little or too many emails.
- 11% responded their own limitations as an issue, typically related to not enough time to volunteer as often as they would like, or awareness of their own physical limitations.
- 11% disliked weather related issues to the weather (too hot, too cold, too wet, too dry) and nuisance wildlife (bugs, and plant, including one dive bombing bird protecting a nest.)

Survey Comment Reflection:

When reading some comments about the weather and bugs, yes, they are a nuisance. As we enjoy the outdoors, it’s funny how some of our best and worst experiences can be at the same time and place. The best we can do is be prepared to protect ourselves against mother nature and adhere to those basic Outdoor Safety Guidelines listed on page 3.

Knowing our limitations is important whether it involve physical strength, endurance or time constraints. As our family dynamics change, work demands increase or decrease, or as we age, we must understand our own personal environment and hopefully use our volunteer time to recharge ourselves. Volunteering should never to be chore or stressor, but rather leave you with a positive feeling.

If you desire a change in your volunteer commitment and want to try something new, or maybe increase or decrease the time you spend with the District, please contact Volunteer Coordinator Bob Menard to discuss other options or opportunities.

Again, we appreciate those who took the time to provide us with some feedback! We plan to conduct an annual volunteer survey going forward with our next survey taking place this fall. We encourage your participation.

We appreciate all the hard work and time you spend volunteering with the District!

** Help Us Update Our Volunteer Database! **

When your life changes include a new address, phone number, or email please remember to let us know about these changes. If you desire a change in your volunteer commitments or want to try something new, please contact Volunteer Coordinator Bob Menard to discuss other options.

Drop a quick note to Volunteers@MCCDistrict.org or call (815) 338-6223, ext. 1201.
SWEEP is a great volunteer program for adults over age 21—especially active retirees. Under the guidance of the Conservation District Police Department, safety watchers help keep sites and trails safe while engaging in their favorite outdoor recreation—biking, hiking, horseback riding, paddling and winter sports. Volunteers report suspicious behavior, assist visitors, and notify the District about potential hazards at sites, such as downed branches, potholes, and suspicious or illegal behavior. Monthly meetings are held April–September to keep volunteers up-to-date with the latest safety information and training.

OUTDOOR SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEERS
Check with your supervisor or Volunteer Handbook for additional safety tips. Need an updated Volunteer Handbook? Contact the Volunteer Coordinator.

BE PREPARED: Dress for activity and weather. Bring drinking water and cell phone.
30-SECOND SAFETY CHECK: Before beginning, survey project area for potential risks.
UTILIZE REQUIRED PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT
POWER TOOLS may be used only by registered volunteers certified by the District.
SITE ACCESS PERMIT: Needed for volunteers at closed sites, off trail or after hours.
ACCIDENTS: Seek or provide appropriate medical attention and notify your supervisor. Complete and turn in PDRMA Accident/Incident form within 24 hours.
PRESCRIBED BURNS & HUNTING SEASONS: Monitors and stewards should call (815) 678–4532 to ask if a site will be closed for prescribed burns or the hunting program.
REPORT SUSPICIOUS BEHAVIOR OR SAFETY CONCERNS at a site to District Police at (815) 338–6223, ext. 1210. If no answer, call (815) 338–2144.
TAKE PRECAUTIONS & BE ALERT FOR OUTDOOR HAZARDS: Weather extremes, biting & stinging insects, tripping & slipping hazards, extreme heat and cold. Learn to identify and avoid dangerous plants, such as poison ivy, wild parsnip and stinging nettle.
TICK AND MOSQUITO BORNE DISEASES are common to our area including Lyme Disease and West Nile Encephalitis. Learn how to protect yourself.

Glacial Park
Ski Patrol
Snowy Sundays 10 a.m.–2 p.m.
Sponsored by the National Ski Patrol and stationed at Lost Valley Visitor Center in Glacial Park, our Glacial Park Ski Patrol volunteers tour the six miles of cross-country trails throughout the park, assisting visitors. Grab your skis and join them for some winter fun!
Programs, Field Trips & Special Events

Each year, the Education Services Department reaches over 20,000 adults and children through a diverse lineup of programs, field trips, activities and special events. The Conservation District could not provide so many free or low-cost program services without the hundreds of hours of service provided by dedicated volunteers!

2019 Quarterly Gatherings for Education Volunteers

Education volunteers and staff meet four times yearly for a fun evening of specialized training to enhance their program skills and knowledge of environmental topics. And because we value the social aspects of volunteering, there’s always time to chat over coffee and cookies with volunteers and staff who share the same interests that attracted you to the District. Gatherings are also the first chance for volunteers to sign up to volunteer at their favorite seasonal programs and events.

- **SPRING:** Thursday, February 7
  7–9 p.m. @ Prairieview Education Center, Crystal Lake

- **SUMMER:** Monday, May 6
  7–9 p.m. @ Lost Valley Visitor Center, Glacial Park

- **FALL:** Wednesday, August 21
  6:30–9 p.m. @ Lost Valley Visitor Center, Glacial Park

- **WINTER:** Tuesday, November 5
  7–9 p.m. @ Prairieview Education Center, Crystal Lake

Try Something New — Not just for Education Volunteers!

Whether or not you are an Education Volunteer, feel welcome to assist with an occasional program. There is no minimum time commitment, so you can choose dates and topics that fit your schedule and interests. Teaching experience is not needed, as you will be volunteering alongside our Education Staff.

Opportunities for Youth Volunteers

Students over age 14 who are planning a future teaching or environmental career may benefit from volunteering with our Education Services Department. Ask them to contact the Volunteer Coordinator to learn more.
LOVE LOCAL HISTORY? Here are three ways volunteers can make an impact in 2018!

The District offers many opportunities for volunteers to immerse themselves in the history of our region. Whether you enjoy restoring buildings to historical accuracy or prefer to dress in historical garb and interpret stories from our past at the Powers-Walker House, the Festival of the Sugar Maples or one of the many programs presented by the Education Services Department, there’s a place for you to contribute!

To learn more about volunteering at the Powers-Walker House or McConnell Farmstead, contact Gail Brown at (815) 678-4532, ext. 8139 or GBrown@MCCDistrict.org.

EDUCATION PROGRAMS & EVENTS VOLUNTEERS KEEP THE PAST ALIVE!
Volunteers assist the Education Services Staff with a variety of historically-themed programs throughout the year, including Life with the Metis, Festival of the Sugar Maples, Time Travelers Camp, and Historical Holidays. Contact the Volunteer Coordinator for information.

POWERS-WALKER HOUSE VOLUNTEERS BRING HISTORY TO LIFE!
One weekend day each month from April through December, volunteers dress in historical garb to reenact the history of the families who lived in the Powers-Walker House. New volunteers supply their own costumes and are expected to have relevant experience in historical interpretation or skills/crafts of the time period. If you are interested in joining the Powers-Walker family, stop by a Living History program and meet them in action!

MCCONNELL FARMSTEAD VOLUNTEERS PRESERVE THE PAST!
Volunteers ranging in skill from novice to professional are leading the effort to restore the historic 1870’s Greek Revival style house and farmstead in Richmond. Sessions are held monthly on a Saturday morning and/or Thursday afternoon to work on indoor and outdoor projects such as painting, carpentry, window repairs, decorating and grounds keeping.

To learn more about volunteering at the Powers-Walker House or McConnell Farmstead, contact Gail Brown at (815) 678-4532, ext. 8139 or GBrown@MCCDistrict.org.
Join Our Volunteer Site Stewards at a Habitat Restoration Work Day!

Conservation District Site Stewards are trained in ecological restoration and have adopted a District Site, where they host regular restoration “workdays”. Come learn about a site’s unique habitat, meet conservation-minded people, and assist with seasonal tasks such as brush cutting, weed removal, tree planting or seed collection.

Contact the Site Steward to confirm the date, time and specific meeting location for that day’s activities.

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**Alden Sedge Meadow**
Harvard
3rd Saturdays, 1–3:30 p.m.
Judy & Jack Speer
(815) 648-1372
smallwatersNFP@yahoo.com

**Cotton Creek Marsh**
Island Lake
1st & 3rd Sundays 1–3 p.m.
Mike Bouska
(815) 759-0731
mikebouska@att.net

**Lake in the Hills Fen**
Lake in the Hills
Call for dates & times.
John Scott
(847) 658-6241
janetescott@yahoo.com

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**Boger Bog**
Bull Valley
4th Saturdays, 10 a.m.—1 p.m.
Ders Anderson
(815) 451-8496
danderson@openlands.org

**Dufield Pond**
Woodstock
2nd Saturdays, 9 a.m.—12
Jeff Schumacher
(815) 337-9315
schumacher.jeff1@gmail.com

**Marengo Ridge**
Marengo
Contact for dates & times.
Kevin Kucharski
(815) 715-3231
kucharski.kevin@comcast.net

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**Bystricky Prairie**
Woodstock
Call for appointment.
Anne Basten
(815) 338-6223, ext. 1234

**Exner Marsh**
Lake in the Hills
3rd Saturdays, 9 a.m.—12
(Also available weekdays.)
Len Bannon
(815) 669-1381
lennsandy@gmail.com

**Pioneer Fen**
Johnsburg
Contact for dates & times.
Pat Sullivan-Schroyer
(815) 347-9005
psullivan@schroyer@gmail.com

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**Coral Woods**
Marengo
Contact for dates & times.
Daily May 19–June 20
Bonnie Leahy
(815) 923-2208
bh.leahy@att.net

**High Point**
Harvard
Call for dates & times.
Orrin Bangert/Randy Stowe
(815) 943-6333
glagoon@yahoo.com

**Pleasant Valley**
Woodstock
Contact for dates & times.
Greg Rajsky
(815) 814-5055
quirkaceae@yahoo.com

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**Dufield Pond**
Woodstock
2nd Saturdays, 9 a.m.—12
Jeff Schumacher
(815) 337-9315
schumacher.jeff1@gmail.com

**Stickney Run**
McHenry
3/9, 4/13, 5/19 9 a.m.—12
contact for more dates.
Pete Jackson
beepjackson@comcast.net
2018 Seed Collection Results!

46  Forays  
49  Volunteers  
621  Collective hours  
290 lbs., 6 oz.  Seed collected from 145 species  
$68,218  Value and savings to Conservation District!

Plant Monitoring & Seed Collection Orientations
For information, contact Volunteer Coordinator Jackie Bero at jbero@mccdistrict.org, 815.678.4532, ext. 8144

Plants of Concern Monitor Orientation
Sun., March 3, 9 a.m.–3 p.m.  Age 18+
Lost Valley Visitor Center, Glacial Park, Ringwood
Signup: PlantsofConcern.org/news-events

In collaboration with the Chicago Botanic Garden, volunteers will monitor rare plants throughout the District. Training provided, but basic familiarity with plant ID required. This involves off-trail hiking to specific monitoring points from April through September. Multiple sites are available throughout the county, and equipment is available for loan. Bring a sack lunch.

Note: You need to be a registered District volunteer to monitor on District sites.

Phenology Plant Monitor Orientation
Sat., March 16, 9 a.m.–Noon  Age 18+
Lost Valley Visitor Center, Glacial Park, Ringwood
Registration Code: 6029

Enjoy watching our natural areas come alive in the spring and summer? Join our phenology program now in its 5th year! Volunteers visit a site every other week to record which plants are blooming May–September. A moderate knowledge of plant ID is necessary, but even more important is an enthusiasm for getting out in the field on a regular basis and willingness to learn.

Note: You need to be a registered District volunteer to monitor on District sites.

Prescribed Burn Crew Member Training
Sat., April 6, 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m.  Age 18+
Lost Valley Visitor Center, Glacial Park, Ringwood
Fee: $35 R/$40 NR  Registration Code: 6030

Free to registered volunteers, call 815.338.6223, ext. 1201 or email Volunteers@mccdistrict.org, for discount code.

Each spring and fall volunteers join staff on prescribed burn crews. Prescribed burning remains one of the most effective tools for restoration. Volunteer involvement allows us to cover larger areas. Note: this activity can be quite physical and involves off-trail hiking for several hours. Protective equipment provided. Bring a lunch.
Volunteer Coordinators:
Jackie Bero—Land Preservation & Stewardship Volunteers (JBerOMCCDistrict.org)
Bob Menard—Education, Scouts, Safety, and all new volunteer inquiries. (BMenardMCCDistrict.org)

Connect with us on Facebook!
Volunteers at McHenry County Conservation District

2019 UPCOMING DATES

Feb. 13   Phenology Program Meeting
Feb. 23   Festival of the Sugar Maples Training
Mar. 3    Plants of Concern Monitor Orientation
Mar. 2–3,  Festival of the Sugar Maples
         and 9–10
March 13  S.W.E.E.P Kick-Off Meeting
Mar. 13   Phenology Plant Monitor Orientation
Apr. 6    Prescribed Burn Crew Training
Apr. 11   A Celebration of Wildflowers & Art
Apr. 20   Earth Day Celebration
Apr. 27–28 World Migratory Bird Days
May 4–5   Weekend of Restoration
May 6     Education Quarterly Gathering
Aug. 21   Education Quarterly Gathering
Nov. 5    Education Quarterly Gathering
Nov. 22   #GreenFriday Habitat Restoration Day