

Volunteer Opportunities

TRAIL OF HISTORY

October 15 & 16, Glacial Park



Don't just visit, be a part of The Trail of History this year —Volunteer! No experience necessary.

Here's your opportunity to step back in time and experience life on the frontier. Families with a sense of adventure can create lasting memories by volunteering together. Children 8-14 may volunteer if accompanied by an adult guardian. The minimum time commitment is a four-hour shift. New volunteers should plan on attending an orientation meeting in August (see below).

If you love to dress up and pretend... volunteering in costume might be a perfect fit! You'll sew your own historically accurate costume based on our simple patterns, and then interpret and demonstrate traditional skills and crafts of frontier family life, such as: candlemaking, cooking, children's games, a two-man saw, apprenticeship, militia tactics, or teaching in a one-room schoolhouse.

If dressing in historic attire is not your thing... volunteer assistance is also an essential part of support services such as: welcoming visitors, providing basic first aid, describing geological history and basic groundskeeping.

To learn more... come to an orientation or contact the Volunteer Coordinator at (815)338-6223 or Dbeck@MCCDistrict.org



TRAIL OF HISTORY VOLUNTEER MEETINGS — All meetings held at Lost Valley Visitor Center, Glacial Park, Rt. 31 & Harts Rd. in Ringwood.

ORIENTATION & COSTUMING MEETING
Required for new Trail of History volunteers
Thursday, Aug. 11, 7-9 p.m.
Tuesday, Aug. 16, 7-9 p.m.

Learn about volunteering at this living history event that attracts thousands of people. Note: the second hour of the orientation is for "costumed" volunteers who will receive instructions for constructing costumes from simple patterns (provided).

TRAIL OF HISTORY KICK-OFF! SIGN UP NIGHT & SOCIAL
Thursday, Aug. 25, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
All New & Returning Trail Volunteers

New this year, sign up night is also a chance to catch up with old Trail buddies as well as share their experiences with new volunteers! Come in costume and start the magic early this year! Enjoy light refreshments, raffles and fun! Volunteers who cannot attend must contact the Volunteer Coordinator ASAP after Aug. 26 to sign up for a time slot.

COSTUME CHECK & SKILLS TRAINING
Thursday, Sept. 22, 6:30-9 p.m.
6:30-7:30 p.m. Cornhusk doll making workshop
8:00-8:30 p.m. Candle making workshop

Is your new costume ready for the Trail? Drop in to have our seamstress check it out. Candle making and cornhusk doll making training sessions are recommended for both new and returning volunteers.

HABITAT RESTORATION Volunteer opportunities open to the public year-round

Do you want to help save the environment—but only have a couple hours to spare? Individuals, students, small groups, and families with children over age six can contact a Site Steward from the list below and participate in restoring native habitat at Conservation Sites. No experience necessary. Wear sturdy footwear and clothing appropriate for outdoor work and weather. Some sites offer service opportunities for larger groups—contact the Volunteer Coordinator at (815) 338-6223 or DBeck@MCCDistrict.org to learn more.

	LOCATION	SCHEDULE	SITE STEWARD — CALL AHEAD
SATURDAYS	Alden Sedge Meadow, Alden	First Saturday of each month.	Dan Wilson (815) 403-7976
	Boger Bog, Bull Valley	Fourth Saturday of each month, 10 a.m.–1 p.m.	Ders Anderson (815) 455-1537
	Grundstrom Woods, Wonder Lake	Second Saturday of each month, 9:30 a.m.–12 p.m.	Chuck and Ann Dubsy (815) 728-9199
	Harrison Benwell, Wonder Lake	First Saturday of each month, 9:30 a.m.–1 p.m.	Pat and Emily Heald (815) 575-1684
	Glacial Park, Richmond	Third Saturday of each month, 1-4 p.m. Meet at Lost Valley Visitor Center.	Ed Collins (815) 678-4532
	Pioneer Fen/Dutch Creek, Johnsburg	Third Saturday of each month; 9 a.m.–12 p.m.	Robert Roe (847) 668-8559, rlroe66@gmail.com ; http://sites.google.com/site/dutchcreekvolunteers/
SUNDAYS	Alden Sedge Meadow South, Alden	Third Sunday of each month, 1-3:30 p.m.	Judy and Jack Speer (815) 648-1372 or smwaters@intergate.com
	Cotton Creek Marsh, Island Lake	First and third Sunday of each month, 1-3 p.m.	Mike Bouska (815) 759-0731
	The Hollows, Cary	Variable Sunday schedule, 9 a.m.–12 p.m.	Margie Szymanskyj (815) 479-0988
VARIABLE	Coral Woods, Marengo	Variable	Kathleen Roberson (815) 245-4093
	Fel-Pro RRR, Cary	Variable	Nancy Williamson (815) 459-0931
	Fox Bluff, Cary	Variable	Connie and Paul Ridl (847) 854-5109
	Lake in the Hills Fen, LITH	Irregular Saturday/Sunday schedule, 9 a.m.–12 p.m.	John Scott (847) 658-6241
	Pleasant Valley, Woodstock	May 8, June 12, 9 a.m.–12 p.m.	Greg Rajsy (815) 814-5055 or quirkaceae@yahoo.com

Get to Know Our Volunteers



Lois & Rick Johnson

...Volunteering for the common good



When they retired in 2005 Lois and Rick Johnson wanted to relocate to an area where open space was valued, recreational amenities were plentiful and volunteer opportunities were readily available. They searched many areas and finally settled in McHenry County where they were impressed by the beauty of the landscape and the Conservation District's philosophy of preserving and restoring local natural areas.

Shortly after moving into their new home the pair began to explore different hiking trails. While exploring Glacial Park, Lois and Rick happened upon Pat Heald, one of the District's volunteer site stewards. During the course of their conversation he encouraged them to drop by an upcoming habitat restoration day where they could help remove invasive vegetation that threatens the health of our woodlands and savannas. Lois and Rick followed up on the invitation and soon became regulars at monthly restoration days, forming many new friendships along the way within the restoration volunteer community.

"It is so very important to us to share in the care of this special part of nature in McHenry County. In our own small way,

we can work to preserve and restore open land so we can pass it on to the children," said Lois. "If our children don't get the opportunity to experience nature, they aren't likely to grow up to cherish it." Lois and Rick also believe in trying to live sustainably. "Rick and I try to learn what it means to live lightly on the Earth." Lois said. "We think about how much is enough, and what we can do about the impacts of climate change. Creation care, a term for faith-based environmental awareness and advocacy, is a responsibility that all people share in common. We've become aware that climate change requires efforts of all sorts, in all places."

Lois and Rick enjoy playing and working outside and have discovered additional volunteer opportunities to do together year-round at the Conservation District. They monitor bluebirds and streams during the summer and lead field trips at *The Festival of the Sugar Maples* in late winter. Recently, they joined the Adopt-A-Trail volunteer program to pick up litter along the Prairie Trail. "What a nice surprise it is when people wave and thank us for picking up garbage as they pass by on their bikes," commented Lois.

On yet another hike at Glacial Park, the Johnsons met Gail Brown, staff member and volunteer organizer for the historic Powers-Walker House and McConnell Farmstead. Gail presented them with the idea of volunteering at the District's annual living history event, the Trail of History. And so they did! For the past six years Rick and Lois have donned historical attire and enlightened "Trail of History" visitors about the interrelationship between nature, man and cultural development. In preparation for their first Trail, they sewed their own period-appropriate costumes and refreshed their knowledge about early settler life in the Northwest Territory. As a former elementary school teacher,

Lois was a natural to portray a frontier teacher at the one-room school house. Lois rings the school bell and takes on the persona of someone who lived during a different time in history. Visiting children are treated as early settlers living on the prairie in 1838 and are invited to participate in short lessons in arithmetic and spelling. "I am always so surprised that kids don't want to leave after the lesson is over. They love pretending to live in another time, and sometimes they stay for several sessions," Lois remarks.

Rick also savors the opportunity to put on a costume during the Trail of History and slip into his nineteenth century innkeeper persona to tend to the Lost Valley Tavern. He welcomes visitors who pass by his station on their way to the valley floor encampment, and often recognizes those who return year after year. "Once you get into costume, it's off you go to a different world!" exclaims Rick. Also joining in on the fun this past year was their granddaughter Isabelle who volunteered for the first time.

"Since we've lived in McHenry County, we've attended many District public programs and now we regularly bring our grandkids with us. Our kids—really, all of us—need to hear field sparrows sing and see sandhill cranes fly overhead. We need to look for trillium and May apples in the spring and big bluestem in the fall, and paddle down Nippersink Creek," declared Lois.

Play a part in this year's Trail of History...



No experience? ...No problem! Training is provided. Choose your role—dress in historical attire (like Lois) and demonstrate traditional crafts, or wear your everyday clothes (like Rick) and help to provide visitors with services.

Get ready for the Trail of History on October 14, 15, and 16. See the previous page to find out how to get started as a volunteer.

