



ERNIE MILLER PARK & NATURE CENTER VOLUNTEER MANUAL



“Volunteers are not paid -- not because they are worthless, but because they are priceless.”

Unknown Author

WELCOME to the Ernie Miller Nature Center Volunteer Program. We are truly thankful for all of our volunteers new and old. Without the help of volunteers, we would not be able to provide many of our quality, affordable, opportunities for the public to connect with nature, the outdoors, and history. The nature center staff hope to make your experience beneficial and enjoyable. Please let us know at any time if you have questions or concerns.

CONTACTS

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ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE

Ernie Miller Park and Nature Center is a part of the Safety, Heritage, and Outdoor Education Division (SHOE) of the Johnson County Park and Recreation District (JCPRD,) a department of Johnson County Government. JCPRD is governed by the JCPRD Board which is appointed and overseen by the Board of County Commissioners.

SHOE/Safety, Heritage, and Outdoor Education Division

Our division encompasses the JCPRD Park Police, whom provide police services in JCPRD parks and facilities, as well as, interpretive programming, the Johnson County Museum staff, Ernie Miller Nature Center, and TimberRidge Adventure Center.

SHOE Mission – Our Mission is to provide police services, resource protection, historical and environmental education, and outdoor recreation opportunities.

SHOE Vision – We continuously seek excellence in law enforcement and interpretation to protect people and resources.

Interpretive Program Purpose – To foster public understanding and stewardship of our natural & cultural resources through environmental and historical education programming and to provide outdoor recreation experiences for skill development that help individuals gain a deeper understanding of their relationship with other and nature.

Time Reporting

It is beneficial to both you and the Nature Center to record your volunteer hours. Volunteer hours will be on a cumulative basis and are reported monthly to the JCPRD Board. It is your responsibility to record your hours in the Volunteer Binder currently located in the library. You will have your own sheet to record hours.

Volunteer Hours

- We ask that you complete approximately 40 volunteer hours per year to remain a part of the Ernie Miller Volunteer Program.
- Please schedule your hours in advance, so we can prepare assignments, unless you have been assigned a special, self-directed project.
- Requests for volunteers will be sent out minimally on a quarterly basis, and then as needed.
- Based on need, we may not schedule all volunteers who offer assistance, as events/projects only require a certain amount of volunteers.
- Be an advocate for your volunteer hours. We will mostly be facilitating scheduling volunteers for events and programs. If you have more time you want to give, call us! We always have things we can find for you to help with. No matter how mundane the project is, everything helps!

Dress Code and Appearance

In addition to the JCPRD dress policies:

- Wear either a shirt or nametag that identifies you with Ernie Miller Nature Center or JCPRD. Kansas Master Naturalist may wear their KMN nametag instead.
- Please no cut-off, ripped, or stained clothing, No sweatpants, low-cut shirts, short shorts, or tank tops. (some exceptions will be made for park maintenance work or cleaning).
- Wear appropriate protective footwear. No flip-flops please. Sandals are not appropriate for outdoor programs, animal care, cleaning, and park maintenance. Closed toed and heeled shoes are preferred.

Volunteer Opportunities

- Assist with Special Events:
 - Sunday Nature Programs – January and February
 - Coffee with the Birds – Tuesdays in January and February
 - Backyard Bird Count – February
 - Girl Scout Event – March
 - Earth Day Event – April
 - Art in the Park - April
 - Enchanted Forest – May
 - Summer Amphitheater Programs – June and July
 - Moths in the Moonlight – Early September
 - Monarch Tagging Event – Mid-September
 - Rain Barrel Workshop – May
 - Scout Badge Day – Late September
 - Whimsical Woods Special Event – Mid October (Need trail guides)
 - Haunted Kansas – Mid to Late October (need trail guides)
 - EcoMeet – Late October
 - Tellebration – November, Storytelling event
 - Winter Solstice Special Event – December
- Animal Care – cage cleaning, feeding animals and filling bird feeders – year-round
- Litter Pick-up – year-round.
- Assist with Maintenance of Butterfly/Wildflower gardens and garden pond.
- Assist resource management- removal/control of honeysuckle, garlic mustard and other woody invasive species.
- Assist with table events – Help staff at table talking about Ernie Miller programs, wildlife artifacts, and possibly handle animals (with training)
- Program Assistant for Summer and Specialty Camps
- Program Assistant for Rain Barrel Classes – Spring
- Roving Naturalist Program – Present nature topics (animal tracks, skulls, pelts, etc.) to park visitors. (must complete training)
- Assist with Front Desk – Greeting customers and completing basic office tasks (folding fliers, stapling, filing, cleaning window, maintaining exhibits)
- Assist with *Tracks Newsletter* – write articles and assist with proofing
- Help promote special events – deliver fliers
- Program assistant – assist with outreach and onsite programs helping carry in animals/props, taking props/animal artifacts around the classroom
- Creek Clean-up – Remove trash from Little Cedar Creek in the park