

Become a Volunteer Naturalist at Holliday Park!



What do volunteer naturalists do?

The major responsibility for volunteer naturalists is to lead hikes of school-age children who visit the park with their teachers for environmental education field trips.

A typical hour-long field trip begins in the classroom with a staff naturalist welcoming the group and giving an overview of the topic. The children are then divided into small groups and led on a hike by staff and volunteers. The busiest times for field trips are spring and fall weekday mornings.

Volunteer naturalists also help with annual events such as Sap to Syrup and Hauntless Halloween; some have assisted with summer day camps; while others have developed curriculum materials.

What is required of a volunteer naturalist?

To be successful, a volunteer naturalist must love nature and enjoy working with children. Initially, a volunteer application is completed, as well as a criminal background check (required for anyone working with children). Then, the fun training program begins.

The majority of our volunteer naturalists attend monthly training sessions held in the nature center. Trainings last approximately 90 minutes and include both a hike and a lecture on a relevant natural history topic. In addition to training, new volunteers "shadow" experienced hike leaders during school field trips and may also be introduced to a veteran volunteer naturalist who can be their mentor.

Once comfortable with the material and logistics of hiking with children, the volunteer is ready to lead groups. While there is no set time commitment, volunteers should be available to help at least once every two weeks during the busy seasons and are encouraged to take advantage of trainings offered throughout the year.

What are the benefits of volunteering?

Volunteers always have the opportunity to learn something new at the park and meet other people with similar interests. Volunteers enhance the educational experience for children by providing a smaller adult-to-child ratio. Further, they share their love of nature through exciting hands-on interactions.

Two volunteers have offered the following viewpoints:

"Holliday Park is such a unique natural setting and offers such diverse experiences to young and old alike that I want to volunteer and be a part of delivering these programs. And because of their flexibility in allowing me to pick the programs and choose the times that I volunteer, I am still free to pursue my other priorities of family, grandchildren, friends and traveling." (PE)

"As one who loves nature, there is nothing more rewarding and fun than helping children discover the many small wonders of the great outdoors. I became a volunteer originally in order to learn more about nature to share with my grandchildren. I find this experience has been more fun and rewarding than I ever could have imagined." (EO)



Please join our volunteer corps! Call Holliday Park at 327-7180
Holliday Park Nature Center, 6363 Spring Mill Rd, Indianapolis 46260

