

Volunteer naturalist position

Purpose

Thousands of children visit Metro's parks each year on school field trips and summer programs. Volunteer naturalists help provide environmental education programs for these groups weekdays in the spring and fall at Oxbow Regional Park and Smith and Bybee Wetlands Natural Area. Volunteer naturalists are also needed for summer programs at Oxbow Park.

Volunteer naturalists have additional opportunities to help with programs for both adults and children year-round at other parks and natural areas throughout the region.

Essential job duties

- Guide groups through environmental education activities, ensuring educational messages are delivered and that participants have a positive and safe experience.
- Regularly help lead school field trips during April, May, June, October and November. Time commitment for each school field trip ranges from four to six hours.
- Help lead youth group field trips, roving naturalist programs, or other education programs regularly during the summer months of June, July and August and occasionally in winter in parks and natural areas. The time commitment for each of these programs averages from two to three hours.
- Take initiative to sign up for upcoming field trips posted in the online Volunteer Information Center and noted in the monthly volunteer naturalist newsletter.
- Coordinate and confirm with Metro staff details about field trips including location, time, meeting spot, materials and education activity plan prior to field trip.
- Maintain good working relationship with Metro Parks and Natural Areas staff, other volunteers and park visitors.

Required knowledge, skills and abilities

- Passionate and curious about nature and the outdoors
- Enjoy working with people
- Strong interpersonal skills and judgment
- Ability and comfort speaking to groups
- Self-directed, responsible
- Reliable – able to be on time and prepared for each volunteer commitment
- Able to walk on uneven surfaces and lift up to 20 pounds
- CPR/first aid certification (can be completed during training)
- Able to act as a professional and friendly Metro representative while in the park, on or off duty.

Time commitment

After attending Nature University, Metro volunteer naturalists are expected to provide a minimum of 40 hours of service within a year (about 10 school field trips). It is recommended that all volunteer naturalists average two to four field trip programs per month during the spring and fall months as well as some summer programs.

Training and benefits provided

- Volunteer naturalist training
- Nature University training notebook
- Free First Aid/CPR training
- Opportunities for continuing education and training on various natural history topics
- Fee waiver for Metro classes
- Annual park entry pass
- Ongoing guidance and support from Metro staff naturalists