

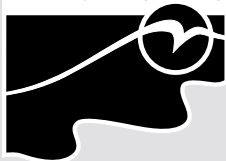
LAKE METROPARKS

Volunteer

Guidebook

A great place to volunteer!

LAKEMETROPARKS



Lake Metroparks Volunteer Services
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Welcome letter

Each year, Lake Metroparks offers thousands of special events, programs and activities designed for participation by our residents. The opportunities are limitless.

These activities are made possible through the dedication of staff and volunteers working together to provide top-quality experiences. The success of these efforts can be measured by the smiles worn by our visitors as they leave our facilities. Without you, the number of choices available would be severely limited. Thank you for taking the time to offer your talents, skills and expertise to improve the quality of life in Lake County. We hope that through your volunteer experiences, you are able to develop new skills, make new friends and have fun. Welcome to the Lake Metroparks team!

This guide has been designed to orient you to the Lake Metroparks volunteer program. This guide should answer most questions you have about volunteering with Lake Metroparks. Please direct any questions not covered in this guide to volunteer services or your staff coordinator.

If you have suggestions about how we can improve volunteering or how Lake Metroparks can better serve visitors, please share them with us at volunteer@lakemetroparks.com.

Sincerely,

Volunteer Services

Lake Metroparks' mission statement

To conserve and preserve the natural resources of Lake County while providing a variety of safe, affordable and enjoyable educational and recreational programs and activities that enhance the quality of life in Lake County now and for the generations to follow.

Volunteer Services mission statement

Volunteer Services supports Lake Metroparks' mission by providing a substantial resource of volunteers to enrich and expand Lake Metroparks' services and programs as well as generate goodwill through citizen participation in Lake Metroparks.

About Lake Metroparks

In 1958, visionary citizens of Ohio's smallest county began campaigning to set aside land for future parks. To conserve and preserve the natural resources of Lake County, Lake Metroparks was formed under the authority of Chapter 1545 of the Ohio Revised Code and is a separate political subdivision of the state of Ohio. Its boundaries are coterminous with the boundaries of Lake County, Ohio, located immediately east of Cuyahoga County. The southern shoreline of Lake Erie forms the northern boundary of the county.

Portions of two state designated wild and scenic rivers—and many tributaries—flow through and are protected by Lake Metroparks. In addition to protecting watersheds and open space, Lake Metroparks annually provides nearly four million visitors with countless recreational and educational experiences at diverse facilities including an agriculturally themed park, nature center, wildlife rehabilitation center, cross-country ski lodge, two golf courses, a paved bike/hike trail, Nature Play and Adventure Play areas, dog park, 200-ft fishing pier, and several parks resting on Lake Erie's shoreline.

The presiding Lake County Probate Court Judge appoints a three-member board of citizens to govern Lake Metroparks without compensation, for three-year alternating terms. The Board of Park Commissioners appoints an Executive Director who serves as the Chief Executive Officer for the park district.

Responsibilities/requirements of Lake Metroparks volunteers

- Volunteers must be treated with courtesy, respect and a professional attitude. Feedback must be provided in constructive terms.
- Volunteer opportunities must be meaningful and appropriate to the abilities and interests of the volunteer.
- Volunteers receive appropriate direction and are recognized for their work.
- Volunteers must be given a volunteer profile. All volunteers must receive a general orientation and written documents. These documents include the Volunteer Guidebook, Guidebook Acknowledgement and SAM Policy (for adults).
- Volunteers must have information for volunteer positions including: an explanation of the volunteer's responsibilities, the name of the volunteer's coordinator and the appropriate use of any equipment and paperwork. Training and information must be updated as necessary.
- Volunteers must have input into decisions that directly affect them. Suggestions from volunteers must be given fair consideration.
- Volunteers will be kept up to date about new volunteer opportunities and other important information. This can be accomplished through newsletters, meetings, etc.
- Volunteers must perform their duties to the best of their abilities and must support the mission, goals and policies of Lake Metroparks. Remember that you are representing the whole park system and not just a particular program area.
- Volunteers must be punctual, sign in and out and notify their coordinator if they will be late or unable to attend.
- Volunteers must notify Volunteer Services of changes in address, interests or availability or they may update their own information online.
- Volunteers must be friendly, courteous, flexible and professional in their dealings with the public, other volunteers and staff.
- Volunteers must work as team members, prepare for assignments as necessary and understand their own limits. All scheduled orientations and trainings must be attended.
- Volunteers must understand and uphold Lake Metroparks' rules/regulations found on lakemetroparks.com/about-us/ranger-department/rules-regulations.
- Volunteers must refer questions from the media regarding Lake Metroparks to the Marketing Department or Executive Director. Do not express personal opinions whenever they may be taken as the official opinion of Lake Metroparks.
- Volunteers must not use or release information about any volunteer for any purpose.
- Use of illegal drugs, alcohol or profanity while volunteering is strictly prohibited and is grounds for dismissal.
- Minimum age for all volunteers is 12. The age restriction may be higher in some areas.
- If you wish to resign from the Lake Metroparks volunteer program, please notify your coordinator and Volunteer Services in writing. Please return uniforms and other equipment to Volunteer Services.
- Lake Metroparks reserves the right to ask volunteers to leave at any time for any reason; advance written notice is not required.

Emergency closings

In the event of inclement weather, fire or power failure, facilities may need to be closed. When facilities are officially closed, volunteers should not report to their volunteer assignments. When in doubt, volunteers should contact the coordinator at the facility where they are volunteering. Volunteers may also call 440-256-2118 x4178 to see if the ski center or beach is open.

Park vehicles

All volunteers who operate park vehicles are required to produce a valid Ohio driver's license. Additionally, volunteers are required to sign a release that authorizes a driving record check to be performed prior to driving any park vehicle. A volunteer with an unacceptable driving record per Lake Metroparks' insurance company will not be authorized to drive a park vehicle.

Timekeeping

All volunteers are required to accurately record their volunteer hours. Sign-in sheets are located at each facility and event.

Volunteer appraisals

Appraisals are conducted at random intervals and provide the coordinator and volunteer the opportunity to set positive and purposeful approaches for meeting goals. Volunteers may be asked to complete program/event evaluations.

Volunteer files

Volunteer Services maintains a file for each volunteer. Volunteer files include an application, BMV and/or background check information and other volunteer records. It is the responsibility of each volunteer to promptly notify Volunteer Services of any changes in volunteer data. Information regarding social security numbers will not be provided to anyone unless a written request is received and approved.

Restrictions

Because volunteers are not employees, the park district must take certain precautions in assigning their duties and defining their responsibilities.

- A volunteer may not be used as a substitute to replace or eliminate any authorized park staff position. A volunteer's role is to assist park employees.
- A volunteer's personal property is not covered by Lake Metroparks if lost or stolen, even if used during service. Therefore, a volunteer should use Lake Metroparks' equipment when available or insure their personal property/equipment.

Guidelines

Drugs/Alcohol/Substance abuse

Volunteers are prohibited from using, possessing, distributing or being under the influence of any alcoholic beverages, drugs, drug paraphernalia or illegal substances on park property or at any park-sponsored event while volunteering. Volunteers suspected of being under the influence will be removed from the volunteer site/event. Violations of the policy may result in suspension or removal from the Lake Metroparks volunteer program.

Smoking

In accordance with Lake Metroparks' mission to provide a safe and healthful work environment, smoking is prohibited throughout facilities and in park vehicles. It is only allowed in specific designated areas.

Uniform policy

Volunteers are expected to dress in a clean, neat and appropriate manner to create a positive impression with the general public. When wearing volunteer uniforms, volunteers are expected to represent Lake Metroparks in a friendly, courteous manner. The way Lake Metroparks volunteers present themselves to the public contributes to the general impression of the park system. Therefore, cooperation is required regarding all matters of uniform and physical appearance.

Specific uniform policies pertain to Farmpark, golf marshals, etc. Please contact your coordinator or Volunteer Services for additional information pertaining to uniforms.

Some volunteers will be issued polo shirts or T-shirts and name tags. Volunteers are expected to wear the uniform provided. If clothing items are not provided, Lake Metroparks requests volunteers wear plain clothing (prefer solid in color). Long pants are preferred. In certain circumstances, because of weather or other conditions, shorts are acceptable. Cutoffs, short shorts, tank tops and tube tops are prohibited. Closed-toe shoes are recommended. If you will be volunteering outdoors, it is recommended that scented perfume/cologne, hairspray or aftershave not be worn as it attracts bees and other insects.

Uniforms should not be worn off-duty. Volunteer uniforms are the property of Lake Metroparks and must be returned to Lake Metroparks when your commitment ends.

Use of park equipment

Volunteers may use Lake Metroparks equipment only after they have received appropriate training and then only at times and under conditions approved by their coordinators.

Volunteer opportunities/selection/placement

The opportunities to volunteer with Lake Metroparks are almost unlimited. Opportunities are available to work with all ages, from preschool children to senior adults. Below is a sampling of volunteer opportunities:

- Adapted recreation
 - Animal care
 - Children's programs
 - Couriers
 - Crafts and hobbies
 - Gardening
 - Gift shop
 - Golf marshals
 - Hike guides
 - Light Horse Brigade
 - Recreation & sports
 - Senior programs
 - Special events
 - Summer camps
 - Trail ambassadors
 - Visitor services
 - Wildlife rehabilitation
- And many more...

Opportunities for volunteering are available seven days a week, year-round.

Placement

Attention is paid to the interests and abilities of the volunteer and the requirements of the volunteer position. Each volunteer completes a volunteer application, which is kept on file with Volunteer Services. Each volunteer participates in a personal screening interview. Interviews are conducted by staff members in person or by phone, depending on the volunteer placement.

Orientation & training

Volunteer Services is responsible for providing all volunteers with a general orientation. Orientation includes the nature, purpose and history of Lake Metroparks as well as the role of volunteers, description of current volunteer needs, general guidelines for volunteers and other relevant information. Staff or volunteers in the area where the volunteer will be serving provide additional training. Volunteer Services works with trainers to ensure that volunteers receive area-specific orientation and training.

Newsletter

The Lake Metroparks Volunteer Newsletter is distributed quarterly and contains information regarding the volunteer program and volunteer staffing opportunities.

Emergency procedures

These procedures are general guidelines to help you more comfortably manage an emergency. Because procedures of facilities may vary, check with your coordinator for the procedures of the facility or event at which you are working.

Our guidelines follow American Red Cross first aid procedures: CHECK, CALL, CARE.

CHECK the scene to see that it is safe for you. Check the situation and any injured person(s) to determine the nature of the emergency, illness or injury. Only move injured person(s) if there is immediate danger, such as a fire or it is the only way you can provide proper care.

CALL 911 if the emergency requires law enforcement or the fire department or if injured person(s) requires medical attention. If you have any doubt, call 911. Give as much information about the emergency and location as you can. Do not hang up until dispatch tells you to. If you are not near a phone but have a radio, announce your name, location and nature of the emergency over the radio.

CARE for the injured person(s) if you know what to do. Knowing first aid will help. However, the most important step is calling 911.

Note: You do not need to call a ranger. They are automatically notified when emergency response teams are dispatched to any of our parks. If emergencies/injuries occur, please inform your coordinator once the situation is under control.

Volunteer benefits

Lake Metroparks recognizes the great value of volunteers. Upon completing the application process, volunteers are issued a name tag and hang tag (to use on rearview mirror of vehicle).

Registered volunteers who provide more than 20 hours of service to Lake Metroparks in one year will be issued a Lake Metroparks volunteer shirt and identification card. (Validation stickers are issued each subsequent year, which are to be applied to the previously issued identification card).

Volunteers with valid identification cards are eligible to receive the discounts listed below. Benefits described are only provided to volunteers providing service and may not be extended to others.

To redeem a benefit, a volunteer must present his/her current Lake Metroparks volunteer identification card along with his/her driver's license (or another valid photo I.D.).

- 15% discount on facility rental rates (applies to all facilities operated by Lake Metroparks, including cabins; does not apply to Pine Ridge Country Club banquet or meeting rooms). The volunteer using this benefit must be present during the rental and is listed as the “responsible party” on the rental agreement.
- 15% discount on recreational and educational programs offered and operated by Lake Metroparks staff; contact the Registration Department to redeem and for details as some exceptions apply, including:
 - o Discount not applicable on day trips.
 - o Not applicable on golf.
 - o Discount not applicable to contracted programs.
- Volunteers qualify for the lowest available senior rate at Erie Shores Golf Course and Pine Ridge Country Club anytime weekdays and after 1 p.m. on weekends and holidays. Tee time required and regular cart fee applies.
- 20% discount on regular-priced merchandise at gift shops and pro shops operated by Lake Metroparks (some exceptions apply); no discount on sale merchandise or purchase of gift cards.
- 20% discount on food concessions operated by Lake Metroparks (snack shops at Pine Ridge Country Club, Erie Shores Golf Course, Chapin Forest Pine Lodge, Fairport Harbor Lakefront Park and Painesville Township Park).
- Free use of cross-country ski and snowshoe equipment at Chapin Forest Pine Lodge and Penitentiary Glen Reservation.
- Free parking and use of kayaks at Fairport Harbor Lakefront Park.
- Free or discounted admission to special events operated by Lake Metroparks that require an admission fee; time and date restrictions may apply, maximum five discounted/free admissions per household per event (contact Volunteer Services for details).
- In addition, some volunteers may receive area-specific benefits, such as:
 - o Special uniforms and/or training opportunities.
 - o Greens fee credits (may be earned by golf marshals and couriers).
 - o Farmpark admission (for Farmpark volunteers; family members pay regular admission to visit the park).

Background checks & SAM policy

Ohio law notice to current and prospective volunteers

In accordance with the Ohio law 187 Sec.109.575 effective March 22, 2001, all organizations and entities that may have volunteers who regularly have unsupervised access to children, anytime, the person might be required to provide a set of fingerprints and a criminal records check might be conducted with respect to the volunteer. All Lake Metroparks volunteers will be required to undergo a criminal background check before they begin their volunteer assignments.

Lake Metroparks Sexual Abuse & Molestation Prevention Policy

In addition to providing background checks, all volunteers should be aware of the following policy. The purpose and intent of Lake Metroparks is to provide a safe, secure environment for all employees, volunteers, and visitors. Lake Metroparks does not permit or tolerate actual or threatened acts of physical or mental abuse, sexual abuse, sexual molestation or sexual misconduct to occur in the workplace, or at any activity sponsored by Lake Metroparks or related to any individual's service to Lake Metroparks. Lake Metroparks has a Zero Tolerance Policy regarding any acts of prohibited conduct.

Sexual abuse takes the form of inappropriate sexual contact or interaction for the gratification of the actor. Sexual abuse includes sexual assault, exploitation, molestation, or injury. It does not include sexual harassment, which is another form of behavior prohibited by Lake Metroparks and which is regulated by a separate procedure and policy. All employees and volunteers are subject to this policy and, before volunteering, must review this policy, acknowledging review, understanding, and receipt.

If a volunteer believes that an assault has occurred, they should call the Ranger Department or the police. All Lake Metroparks staff members who learn of sexual abuse being committed must immediately report it to the Ranger Department and the Executive Director. If the staff member or volunteer is uncomfortable reporting the incident to the Ranger Department or the Executive Director, they may contact Lake Metroparks Prosecuting Attorney or Legal Counsel. If the victim is an adult, the abuse will be reported by the Executive Director to Adult Protective Services and Chief Ranger. If a child is the victim, the Executive Director will report it to parents or guardians, Jobs and Family Services, and Chief Ranger. The Executive Director should notify the Board of the allegations. The Executive Director should inform the insurance carrier and seek advice in immediate handling of the matter. Legal advice and counsel regarding the handling of the matter should be obtained immediately.

The Executive Director should communicate to appropriate staff the existence of the incident, steps being taken in response, and who should speak to the press, general public, and other agencies, etc. Any employee or volunteer who is suspected of, or reported as, engaging in sexual activity, misconduct, or relationships with a service recipient, will be immediately suspended, pending an investigation into the allegations of abuse.

To provide a safe environment for minors, Lake Metroparks strives for a minimum of two adult workers to supervise or be in attendance with minors during agency-related activities. The purpose is to avoid one-on-one interactions between adults and minors that are not easily observable by others. Additional guidelines for supervision and interaction with minors include:

- No employee or volunteer is permitted to be alone with one child in any closed room (door must be open).
- All activities and interactions between volunteers and minors should be conducted in easily accessible, visible areas. If any volunteer is alone with a minor or group of minors in a room with a door, the door must remain open, or the door must have a visible window/glass for easy observation from the outside.
- Volunteers must refrain from any inappropriate physical contact with minors. For example, a shoulder hug is a sign of encouragement, but full-frontal embrace is not appropriate.
- Volunteers should refrain from allowing minors to sit on their laps, having their arms around minors, or any other physical contact that could be misrepresented by someone passing by.
- Document and immediately report any unusual incidents, including disclosures of abuse or maltreatment, behavior problems, and how they were handled, injuries, or any interactions that might be misinterpreted.
- Volunteers are prohibited from giving individual gifts to minor participants unless approved by the Department Supervisor and the minor's parent or guardian.

We prohibit any retaliation against anyone, including any employee, volunteer, board member, or other individuals, who in good faith, reports sexual abuse and alleges it is being committed or participates in the investigation. Lake Metroparks prohibits making false or malicious sexual misconduct statements/allegations and deliberately providing false information during an investigation. Anyone who violates this rule is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Grievance procedure

Lake Metroparks ensures that every volunteer is treated in a fair and impartial manner, regardless of position, race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation or any other protected status in accordance with applicable federal and state laws.

If a volunteer-related problem occurs while a volunteer is on duty, the volunteer should attempt to settle it with his or her coordinator. If the volunteer is not satisfied with the solution, he or she may send a letter outlining the problem, along with information about what has already been done to resolve it, to the coordinator's department head, with a copy to Volunteer Services. If the volunteer is still not satisfied with the outcome, he or she may appeal in writing to the Executive Director, whose decision will be final.



THANK YOU

for your service!


LAKE COUNTY PROBATE JUDGE
Mark J. Bartolotta

BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
Gretchen Skok DiSanto • Frank J. Polivka • John C. Redmond

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Paul Palagyi



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Lake Metroparks does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, age, nationality or disability in employment, services, programs or activities. Should special assistance be required in visiting facilities and/or participating in programs or activities of Lake Metroparks, please call 440-358-7572 at least 48 hours in advance.