



# **Volunteer Handbook**

**Updated: February 2023**

# Welcome!

Dear Volunteer,

Thank you for your interest in volunteering to help Le Sueur County Parks. There is nothing more important or rewarding than finding a way to invest your time, interest and passions by giving back to your community in the form of helping your neighbors and friends. Volunteers bring a wide array of knowledge, skills and experiences that allow the Parks Department to provide services, programs, outdoor recreation, and manage natural resources within our parks system.

Our volunteers have helped us to:

- Greet and guide park visitors towards a successful visit
- Protect, restore and enhance our natural areas
- Keep our parks and facilities clean to create an environment for all to enjoy
- Develop a lifelong appreciation of the outdoors in young generations
- Expand our local citizens understanding of the natural environment
- Inspire others to become stewards of the environment
- Allow Le Sueur County Parks to offer outdoor recreation activities
- Create unique and special events within our parks and facilities

Without the help of our volunteers, we would not be able to fulfil our mission statement:

“To improve the quality of life by providing public access to natural resources and outdoor recreation in a safe and welcoming environment for all to enjoy.”

Thank you,

Le Sueur County Board of Commissioners  
Le Sueur County Parks Board  
Le Sueur County Parks Department

John King  
Larry Maruska  
Tyler Luethje

2023 Board Chairman  
2023 Board Chairman  
Parks Director

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## How to get started:

Determine your level of involvement and commitment.

- Do you want to volunteer one time for a few hours?
- Do you want to volunteer on an on-going basis?
- Do you want to volunteer by yourself or are you a part of a group?
- Do you have a specific project, passion, interest or idea you would like to help with?

Fill out a volunteer application form from our website [www.co.le-sueur.mn.us](http://www.co.le-sueur.mn.us) and complete a waiver form prior to starting your volunteer duties.

## Types of Volunteers:

### Natural Resources and Environmental

Natural resource volunteers will assist with the maintenance of natural areas including, trees, gardens, prairies, land restoration, aquatics, and much more. Projects could include short term day projects such as tree trimming along trails or long term projects such as establishing a new prairie or the ongoing removal of invasive species.

### Parks Ambassadors

Parks ambassadors volunteers will assist with specific duties related to a park. Examples could include constructing a small landscape project, spring clean-up within a park or on going visits to manage a specific job within a park.

### Recreation

Recreation volunteers will volunteer their time to assist with or provide programming within a park. Programming could be related to anything from arts to education to hiking, summer, winter, and everything in between.

### Special Events

Special event volunteers will assist with unique events within our parks. It could range from helping coordinate parking at a cross country meet to being a volunteer in our haunted house at Halloween.

### Unique Projects

Volunteers on unique projects could include an individual working towards becoming an Eagle Scout, someone completing their requirements for a Master Naturalist, a non-profit group looking to do specific community service project, or an individual with a unique passion or talent they think could compliment a park or facility.

### Adopt a Park, Trail or Facility

Adopt a park, trail or facility if you or your group is interested in taking on a specialized and on-going role for a monthly, seasonal or multi-year commitment. Examples could include maintenance and trimming of specific trail(s), maintenance, clean-up, and supervision of a specific park(s), or caring for a facility and helping with its rentals. Adopting will also get your individual or group name on a sign, plaque or park amenity named after service.

# **Volunteer Policies and Procedures:**

## **Age Minimum**

Le Sueur County Parks appreciates volunteers of all ages and ability levels and can accommodate your duties to your abilities. Volunteers under age 16 must be a part of an organization with adult leadership to supervise or part of a group or family that is working together on their volunteer duties. Volunteers under age 18 must have a parent/guardian fill out the Minor Volunteer Permission form prior to starting.

## **Background Checks**

Background checks will be required for volunteer duties that involve public interaction with minors at special events or programs. All volunteer duties are unique and different, background checks may be required for other volunteer opportunities as well. Background checks will take approximately 3 business days.

## **Injury, Incident and Accident Reports**

For all serious emergencies, call 911. Any accident that involves an on-duty volunteer must be reported to the designated supervision, regardless of the injury. All supervisors will be equipped with a basic first aid kit. If you have unsafe working conditions or equipment, please report them to your supervisor.

## **Liability**

Volunteers for Le Sueur County Parks are protected under MN Statute 466 which covers damages that may result in the volunteer's actions but it does not cover injuries that may be sustained while volunteering. All volunteers must read, sign, and acknowledge a Waiver of Liability prior to volunteering. Volunteers under age 18 must have an adult or legal guardian sign the waiver.

## **Orientation and Training**

Each volunteer, their duties, and park is unique and different. Prior to beginning your volunteer work you will receive general training that is appropriate to your duties along with instructions on what to expect during your volunteer duties.

## **Supervision**

All volunteers will have an identified supervisor. The supervisor may be a Le Sueur County employee, another volunteer, or even the leader of your group or organization.

## **Volunteer Equipment Uses:**

### **Chemical Use**

Volunteers age 18+ may use non-restricted chemicals, herbicides and pesticides during their volunteer duties when previously approved by the supervisor. Restricted use chemicals, herbicides and pesticides may only be used if the individual has the appropriate license and the use is previously approved by Le Sueur County Parks Director.

### **Personal Property and Equipment**

Use of personal property and equipment for volunteer purposes should be discussed with the supervisor prior to use. Contents coverage may be available for certain equipment up to a maximum of \$5,000 per loss occurrence on a cost replacement basis.

### **Power Equipment and Tools**

Volunteers under age 18 may use hand tools such as pruners, handsaws, and shovels; and battery operated equipment such as drills if they are under the immediate and close supervision of an adult. Volunteers under age 18 may not use gas powered equipment such as chainsaws, trimmers, pole saws, augers, and brush trimmers; and battery powered equipment that cuts, such as saws. Volunteers over age 18 may use hand tools and battery operated equipment without supervision if it was discussed with the supervisor in pre-volunteer orientation. Volunteers over age 18 may use gas powered equipment with prior approval and if they are under the immediate and close supervision of the supervisor or another adult volunteer. Volunteers need to express and show a thorough understanding of the designated piece of equipment prior to use.

### **Transportation and Driving**

Volunteers are not permitted to use Le Sueur County vehicles or other equipment such as ATV's, UTV's, Snowmobiles, Boats, or machinery such as Tractors, Skidloaders, Loaders, etc. without approval from a Le Sueur County Employee or Ney Nature Center staff member. With auto liability coverage, the insurance follows the vehicle. If a volunteer has approval to use a Le Sueur County vehicle, then Le Sueur County will provide liability and physical coverage. If a volunteer uses their own vehicle, then they will also assume their personal auto insurance policy when performing volunteer duties for Le Sueur County Parks. Volunteers must show proof of auto insurance prior to using their own vehicle for volunteer duties. If liability exceeds the amount of primary coverage, Le Sueur County may provide secondary coverage for liability only, not physical.

# Volunteer Expectations:

## **Absences**

Le Sueur County Parks is prepared for your volunteer duties, and often times has staff, supplies, equipment, etc. prepared for your duties in advance. If you cannot make your assigned volunteer position, please let Le Sueur County Parks know as soon as possible.

## **Confidentiality**

Volunteers are entrusted to keep private the personal information of the program participants, staff and other volunteers; along with information on parks and facilities.

## **Dress Code**

Volunteers represent Le Sueur County Parks and must present a positive appearance to the general public. Volunteers are not permitted to wear clothing that depicts illegal activity, inappropriate behavior, images, or words. Volunteers are expected to dress appropriately for their duties, which include being aware of the forecasted weather conditions and the demands of the task. For example, do not wear flip flops when doing a landscape activity that would be better with boots. This will be discussed prior with your supervisor. If you have been given a specific volunteer shirt or uniform, you are expected to maintain it and wear it during your volunteer duties.

## **Drug, Alcohol and Tobacco Use**

Volunteers will be dismissed if they are under the influence of drugs or alcohol while performing their volunteer duties. Per Le Sueur County Parks Ordinances, Tobacco use is only allowed in parking lots and reserved campsites.

## **Expectations**

Volunteers represent Le Sueur County Parks and are expected to work under the same rules and regulations as employees. Volunteers are expected to respect the environment, natural resources, parks, facilities, equipment, fellow volunteers, staff, and the general public.

## **Interacting with the Public**

In the role of a volunteer, you are representing Le Sueur County Parks to the general public. They may not know you are a volunteer or what your specific duties are. Please represent the Parks Department to the best of your ability. If a visitor asks a question, you may answer it if you know the answer or refer them to an employee. If they need a location of a trail, restroom, etc., you may point them in the right direction. If you cannot help them, please take their name and number and so an employee can handle the inquiry. Do not argue with a visitor and always remain in a calm and friendly manor. Explain that you are a volunteer but you will get them in contact with the appropriate person. As a volunteer, you may educate and inform the public on parks rules and ordinances, but you cannot enforce them.

## **Right of Publicity**

When volunteering with Le Sueur County Parks, you express your rights to have your name, image, likeness, organization, or any other identification of the participant or group used in county publications, webpage, social media, and other marketing materials without compensation or right to prior review.

## **Safety for Minors and Vulnerable Populations**

Supervisors are in charge of making sure the following does not occur; at no time may a single volunteer be alone with a single child where they cannot be observed by others. Exceptions include a parent/child family that is volunteering together and a youth or non-profit group that has their own leaders in charge of the group.

## **Severe Weather**

Volunteers are not expected to take unnecessary risks during potential or severe weather or driving conditions. Depending on the volunteer location, park or storm shelters may or may not be available. Supervisors are in charge of monitoring the weather forecast and doing their best to get volunteers to a safe location before a storm arrives. The personal safety of volunteers and park visitors is their own responsibility.

## **Speaking to the Media**

All volunteers are representatives of Le Sueur County Parks. If you are approached by the media during your duties, you may correspond with them AFTER gaining approval from your supervisor and having an understanding of what the media will be requesting.



# Volunteer Goals

## **Distinguished Volunteer Service Award**

Each February, the Parks Board will take nominations and recognize one individual or group for their volunteer efforts from the previous calendar year. Volunteers may be nominated by other volunteers, staff, appointed officials, and the public. The awarded Volunteer Service of the Year nominee will be recognized at a Board of Commissioners meeting in the spring with a plaque. Recipients will also be recognized with a plaque within a park or facility.

## **Inclusion and Adaptive Volunteering**

Volunteering is meant to help much more than just Le Sueur County Parks. The volunteers can gain a new insight or appreciation for something, develop a work ethic and other skills that can carry over to serve them in many functions. Volunteering should be fun, increase self-esteem, teach new skills, and develop friendships. Le Sueur County Parks will provide appropriate and reasonable accommodations, support, and preparation to make a volunteer experience inviting for all.

## **Reporting or Tracking Hours**

Please track and report your hours worked to Le Sueur County Parks. It is important to show accurate citizen involvement within the parks to the Parks Board, County Commissioner's and general public. If volunteer hours and supporting documentation, signatures, or paperwork is needed; Le Sueur County will help.

## **Roles of County and Volunteer:**

### **What Le Sueur County Parks provides:**

- Le Sueur County Parks T-Shirt if you make a commitment to volunteer 8+ hours per year.
- Depending on volunteer activity, light snack or refreshments.
- Basic personal protection equipment that could be needed based on the duties, such as work gloves, rubber gloves, eyewear, hard hats, safety vests, ear protection.
- Equipment, tools, materials, supplies and resources needed to complete your duties.
- Name Tag
- Ongoing encouragement and potential resources towards furthering your skills, including workshops and other education or practice opportunities
- If the volunteer has performed satisfactory work, Le Sueur County and the volunteer's supervisor will provide feedback, coaching, reviews, or references to help the volunteer with future goals.

### **What the volunteer provides:**

- An understanding and appreciation of Le Sueur County Parks, natural resources, outdoor recreation, and a willing desire to learn about their duties.
- Understanding the expectations within this handbook.
- Commitment to your duties or project.
- Provide transportation to and from training and work locations.
- Coming prepared with the appropriate clothing, attire, snacks, water, etc.

# Le Sueur County Parks Information:

## Parks Sites and Addresses

- Bradshaw Woods, West Derrynane Street, Le Center (west of Fairgrounds)
- Clear Lake Park & Campground, 35194 Clear Lake Lane, Le Center
- Lake Emily Park & Ludwick Island, 33016 Lake Emily Road, St. Peter
- Geldner Saw Mill & Park, 46542 Beaver Dam Road, Cleveland
- Lake Gorman Park & Access, 19634 Gorman Lake Park Lane, Kilkenny
- Henderson Station River Access & Park, 29030 River Street, Le Sueur
- Lake Jefferson Fishing Pier, 28211 470<sup>th</sup> Street, Madison Lake
- Ney Nature Center, 28238 Nature Center Lane, Henderson
- Ray's Lake Park, 1395 1<sup>st</sup> Street North, Elysian
- Richter Woods Park, 35674 173<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, Montgomery
- Lake Volney Park, 18608 Beach Lane, Le Center
- Lake Washington Regional Park & Campground, 47102 Washington Park Road, Kasota

## Public Water Access Sites and Addresses

- Lake Francis Access (West), 23085 Lake Francis Road, Elysian
- Fish Lake Access, 19866 Fish Lake Lane, Elysian
- Kasota River Access, 910 North Rice Street, Kasota
- Lake Pepin Park & Access, 16901 County Park Road, New Prague
- Ray's Lake Access, 1241 1<sup>st</sup> Street North, Elysian
- Sabre Lake Access, 44168 Sabre Lake Lane, Kilkenny
- Steele Lake Access, 21538 Steele Lake Lane, Elysian
- Sunfish Lake Access, 45825 State Highway 13, Kilkenny

## Cemeteries and Addresses

- Haugenstein Cemetery, 22613 Stavenau Lane, Elysian
- Meeker Cemetery, 43686 261<sup>st</sup> Avenue, Cleveland
- Sharon Cemetery, 36725 291<sup>st</sup> Avenue, Le Sueur

## Parks Contacts

- Le Sueur County Parks Director, Tyler Luethje
  - 507-357-8201, [tluethje@co.le-sueur.mn.us](mailto:tluethje@co.le-sueur.mn.us)
- Lake Washington Regional Park & Campground
  - 507-995-1161, [lakewashingtonpark@co.le-sueur.mn.us](mailto:lakewashingtonpark@co.le-sueur.mn.us)
- Ney Nature Center
  - 507-357-8580, [info@neycenter.org](mailto:info@neycenter.org)