



Become a VIP - Volunteer in the Parks! The Chicago Park District (CPD) manages over 220 facilities throughout the city including 7600 acres of parkland and 59 nature areas. The Chicago Park District provides a variety of volunteer stewardship opportunities in the District's nature areas. Stewardship is a satisfying and rewarding way to not only experience the natural areas in the city, but also contribute in a meaningful way to the ecological health of these areas.

For this project, you'll work with a representative from Chicago Park District to find a local park facility or nature area where you and your project team can volunteer. The Chicago Park District currently has 24 nature area volunteer stewards that organize regular volunteer stewardship workdays at 21 nature areas. For a C3 project you may choose to work with an existing stewardship group or take on a new project at a stewardless nature area. To make this a C3 project, you'll need to volunteer for four workdays and involve a project team of at least two people. The Park District will help you organize a series of volunteer workdays or a volunteer project, which may consist of restoration projects such as: planting native species, removing invasive species, trash pickup, leading nature walks, or building bird and bat houses. The Chicago Park District is open to creative ways of engaging the community in their local nature area, so new ideas are always welcome.

## **Timeline:**

**Project Proposal due online:** 2 weeks after the Community Organizing class

**Part I: Contact the CPD representative and choose your site:** 2 weeks

**Part II: Begin site visits and tracking environmental benefits:** 2 months

**Part III: Final Report due online:** 2 weeks after your last visit

**Part IV: Follow up (optional):** Continue cleanup at your site

## **Materials:**

- Trash bags to collect waste
- Blue bags to collect recyclables
- Canvas work gloves
- Disposable gloves
- **\$800 Savings Challenge** cards

## **Part I: Contact the CPD Representative and Choose Your Site**

**~2 weeks**

Talk with your liaison who will help coordinate with the Chicago Park District to find an existing site steward for you and your project team to work with. You can also find available stewardship sites and activities by calling the Volunteer Office at (312) 742-4775 or by visiting [www.chicagoparkdistrict.com](http://www.chicagoparkdistrict.com).

## **Part II: Tracking Environmental Benefits**

**~2 months**

Once you begin your site visits, make sure you record and calculate your project's environmental benefits. This could include the amount of litter collected, number of site visits, number/weight/volume of invasive species removed, community members involved (all of whom hopefully signed **\$800 Savings Challenge** cards!), and outreach you did around your site visits.

## **Part III: Turn in Final Report**

**Within 2 weeks of project completion**

As soon as you've calculated environmental benefits, please fill out your Final Report online. Corresponding materials such as digital photographs, outreach flyers or posters, press releases, or news clippings should be emailed to [conservation@cityofchicago.org](mailto:conservation@cityofchicago.org). Please also enter the information from your **\$800 Savings Challenge** cards on <http://www.chicagoclimateaction.org>.

## **Part IV: Continued Site Visits (Optional)**

We hope you will continue volunteering long after you graduate from C3. We also hope that you will consider being trained as a full site Steward – think of the impact you could have!