



VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK



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Mission & Vision

The mission of Grass River Natural Area, Inc. (GRNA, Inc.) is to manage the Grass River Natural Area, conserve and protect its watershed, and provide opportunities that increase knowledge, appreciation, and community-wide stewardship of the natural environment.

The vision of GRNA, Inc. is to serve as a regional leader for ecological conservation by connecting people to nature through education, research, and experiences.

This mission and vision are fulfilled through thoughtful management of the Grass River Center and 1,492 acres of ecologically significant habitat in addition to classes, events, and opportunities that connect adults and children to the importance of preserving special places like Grass River Natural Area (GRNA).

Values & Norms

The actions of all staff, board members, and volunteers are guided by and adhere to GRNA, Inc.'s organizational values and norms. These values and norms are:

Inclusivity

- We welcome all
- We provide a safe space for expressing ideas and asking questions
- We are open-minded
- We listen to and act on all concerns
- We value diversity in our visitors, staff, board, and volunteers

Professionalism

- We act with respect
- We represent GRNA with integrity
- We treat others with kindness and courtesy
- We provide high-quality services
- We are qualified and knowledgeable
- We nurture leadership qualities in our staff and board

Integrity

- We value healthy relationships in our environment and our work
- We honor our commitments
- We are genuine and honest in our relationships
- We value transparency

Sustainability

- We think long-term
- We practice and support conservation of resources
- We budget our resources responsibly
- We anticipate and adapt to change

Welcoming

- We prioritize facilities, grounds, and exhibits that are inviting, safe, and user-friendly

- We smile at and greet people warmly
- We encourage all people to visit and participate in our programs and projects
- We encourage curiosity and facilitate discovery
- We have fun

Accessibility

- Our trails are well-marked and easy to use
- We ensure that programs, exhibits, and facilities are welcoming and accessible to all
- Our presentation of information is geared toward all audiences and skill levels

Appreciation

- We show gratitude
- We regularly thank and acknowledge donors, volunteers, and visitors
- We acknowledge exceptional work/success

Science-based

- We collect high-quality data according to standardized protocols
- We cite only reliable, accurate sources
- We seek out replicable, peer-reviewed evidence
- We support scientific research

Who we are

Grass River Natural Area is one of Michigan's premier nature preserves. Founded in 1969, GRNA was established by the community for the community. Located along Antrim County's Chain of Lakes, GRNA's wetlands act as a filter for millions of gallons of water flowing into East Grand Traverse Bay and Lake Michigan. GRNA is a peaceful place that is home to hundreds of species of plants and animals, living amid floating sedges and conifer swamp that extend as far as the eye can see.

GRNA, Inc. was established in 1979 and is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that has a private-public partnership with Antrim County municipal government. Antrim County owns the road, boardwalks, bridges, buildings, and most of the land. GRNA, Inc. raises money to protect, preserve, and manage more than six miles of shoreline and 2.5 miles of the Grass River for public use by the people of Antrim County and its visitors. Its goal is to educate children and the community about the importance of stewardship, leadership, research, and educational study of the Grass River Natural Area. The corporation is governed by the GRNA, Inc. Board of Directors.

The 1,492 acres in the preserve were put together out of many separate properties to make a safe haven for the natural world to thrive. Winding trails through tall green ferns covering the forest floor, an abundance of wildlife and wild berries--this is Grass River Natural Area. GRNA is connected to the breathtaking streams and lakes that call us back to Northern Michigan when we are away and fill us with life when we return. Whether we are lucky enough to live among the natural beauty or are only visiting, these are the reasons we call northern Michigan home. Our connection to woods and

water enhances our quality of life and this is why understanding and preserving our natural world is critical.

Each year thousands of individuals visit the Grass River Natural Area and hundreds volunteer to make those visits memorable. Through workshops and programs, GRNA, Inc. offers hands on, enriching experiences that enable people to connect to nature. And while there are many land protection organizations in the region, there are only a few who have education as an integral part of their mission. Because of this focus on education, visitors to GRNA leave with an increased appreciation for the natural world and an understanding of their important role in its preservation.

Grass River Natural Area is a place locked in time, distant from surrounding pressures of life, and its future is in the hands of its stakeholders: county officials, residents, and visitors. It is critical that these stakeholders continue to recognize the value in protecting this irreplaceable natural resource. That is why it is important for Grass River's staff and volunteers to teach future generations about their roles in sustaining it. As natural resource managers and environmental educators, Grass River Natural Area, Inc. prides itself in taking a strategic approach in conservation efforts and educational programming to best meet the needs of the land it manages and the community that benefits from it. As an innovator using new approaches and techniques in both research and preservation efforts, GRNA, Inc. is doing its part to manage the water quality of the Grass River watershed and to ensure that GRNA remains a viable educational and recreational resource for all to enjoy.

Grass River Natural Area exists because of the community support received over the years and, hopefully, will be sustained by a community that values the natural world. The role of organizations like Grass River Natural Area, Inc. is becoming increasingly important. Over the years we have witnessed the loss of open space throughout our great state of Michigan as subdivisions and other developments replace our scenic views and forests where we once walked and hiked.

We all have a shared responsibility to conserve and educate the community about our natural world: to use only what we need, make smarter choices, and pass on to future generations the beauty, wildlife, water and natural resources we have today. Protecting our natural areas will ensure that we still have places to hike, bike, boat, fish, hunt, view wildlife, or just enjoy the quiet pleasure of nature for many years to come.

History

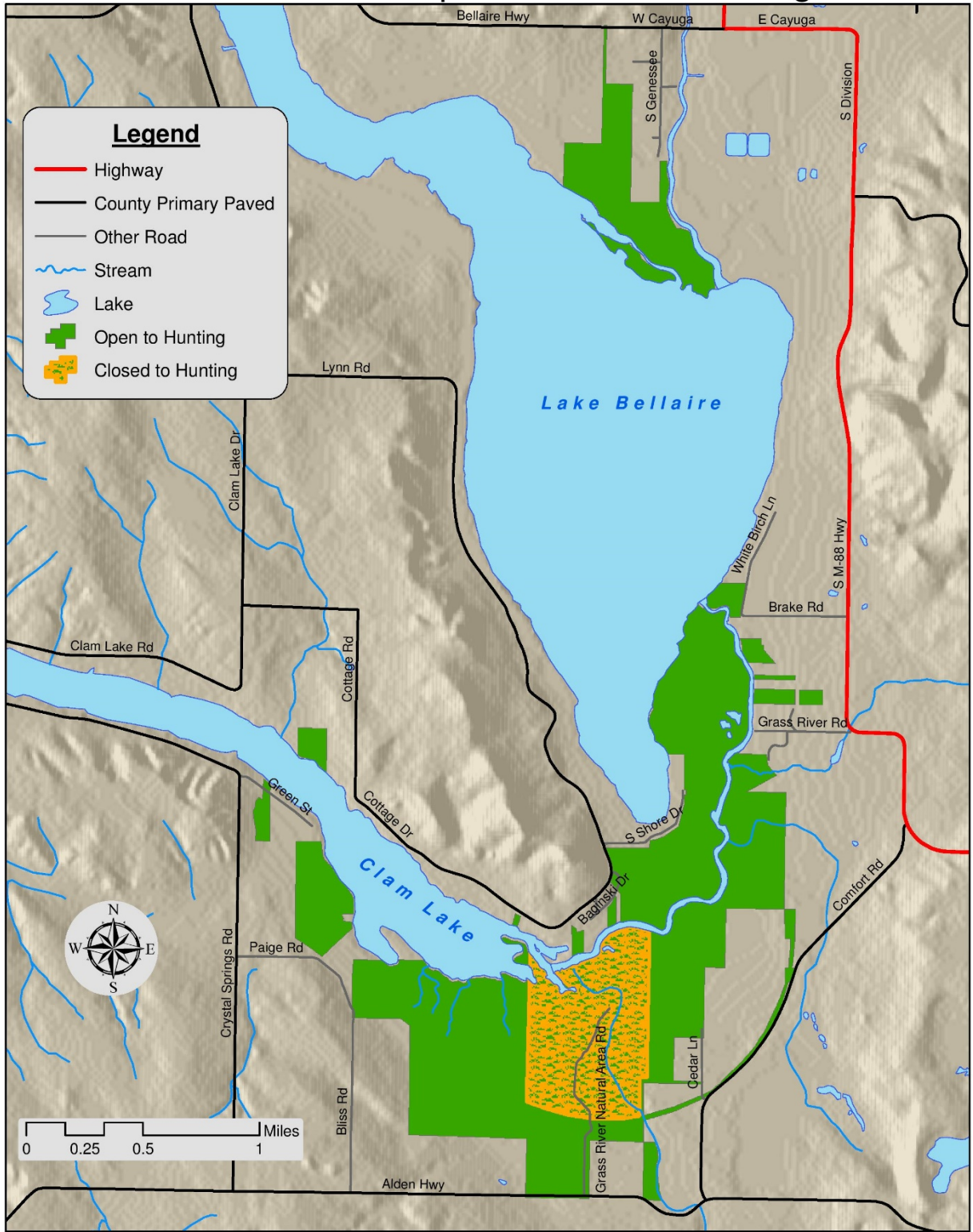
The Grass River has meandered between Lake Bellaire and Clam Lake for thousands of years, linking the two on the well-known Antrim County Chain of Lakes, which also includes Torch, Intermediate and Elk Lake, in addition to many others. It is an ecologically important area that is home to hundreds of plants and animals and an equally diverse network of wildlife, living amid floating sedges and conifer swamp that filter the water emptying into Lake Michigan's Grand Traverse Bay.

In the 1960s, the serene setting along the Grass River was about to change when land developers began filling the wetlands in preparation for building sites. The plan came to the attention of a handful of local county residents who feared that the destruction of the natural habitat and ecosystem would harm water quality, wildlife, flora and fauna. They took their concerns to Antrim County officials who supported the grassroots efforts and together created one of Michigan's premier nature preserves, Grass River Natural Area. Major contributors and volunteers for the project attended a ceremony in November 1977 at the Antrim County Courthouse to officially dedicate the natural area.

Grass River Natural Area, Inc. was incorporated as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization in 1979 to help purchase and conserve ecologically significant habitat to be owned by Antrim County and managed for public use by GRNA, Inc.

Hundreds of individuals, businesses and foundations have contributed to the success of the project over the past 50 years. Along with Antrim County, early backers of the "Grass River Wildlife Project" included The Three Lakes Association and the Nature Conservancy. Since then, the State of Michigan, government agencies, foundations, businesses and private individuals by the hundreds have generously supported the initiative, making it a truly collaborative community undertaking.

GRNA - Areas Open/Closed to Hunting





Grass River Natural Area
6500 Alden Highway
Bellaire, MI 49615

Trail Map

In an emergency, call 911
Grass River Center - (231) 533-8576
GRNA Admin Office - (231) 533-8314
www.grassriver.org



Volunteer Benefits

Volunteers in our community have been the backbone for the preservation and continued success of Grass River Natural Area for more than 50 years. These individuals have an inherent passion to preserve and sustain this Antrim County gem for future generations and to teach and inspire the next generation of volunteers. The work that our volunteers accomplish is critical to achieving our mission. They not only provide extra hands but also contribute new ideas and methods and connect to others within the community.

Grass River Natural Area volunteers are given the opportunity to utilize their talents while gaining valuable knowledge and experience. Through volunteer work at GRNA, individuals are able to serve the community by supporting one of our region's most valuable natural assets. Our volunteers not only benefit through the gratification of monitoring and sustaining critical habitats within the Antrim County Chain of Lakes region but also attain individual fulfillment from the social atmosphere of volunteer events and the immersion into the natural world.

Outside of these community driven and intrinsic rewards, GRNA volunteers also receive the following:

- Regular volunteer e-newsletter
- Scheduled training and personal enrichment opportunities
- Invitation to annual volunteer recognition event

Volunteer Rights & Responsibilities

It is your right...

- To be assigned to a job that is worthwhile and challenging with freedom to use existing skills or develop new ones.
- To be kept informed of upcoming projects, events, and what is going on at Grass River Natural Area.
- To receive a written job description, orientation, training, and supervision for the job you accept and to know why you are being asked to do a particular job.
- To know whether your work is effective and how it can be improved.
- To have your questions answered and your comments and suggestions welcomed.
- To be respected for the skills and experiences you bring to your work and appreciated for the contributions you make toward accomplishing our mission.
- To be given recognition of your day-to-day contributions by staff and your fellow volunteers.
- To declare allowable non-reimbursed out-of-pocket costs for federal income tax purposes when serving with a charitable organization.

It is your responsibility...

- To commit to at least one project or area of service and to only accept assignments you are capable of or willing to perform.
- To fulfill the commitment you've made to a project or notify your supervisor early enough so that a substitute can be found.
- To attend the orientation session and stay informed via meetings or email.
- To become familiar with the mission, policies, and procedures of Grass River Natural Area, Inc.
- To represent the Grass River Natural Area in a manner that reflects the advancement of our mission, our interests in the community, and the trust we place in you.
- To protect confidential information, facilities, records, systems, and data of Grass River Natural Area, Inc. and its donors, employees, and other volunteers. Volunteers may learn information that has not been released to the public or is not intended for the public and are expected to maintain the confidentiality of that information.
- To avoid public statements, interviews with the press, or press releases. They are the responsibility of the Board Chair, Executive Director, or staff appointed by the Executive Director.
- To care for, help maintain, and return tools and equipment that you use.
- To take advantage of opportunities to upgrade and sharpen your skills whenever possible.

Getting Started

The first step to becoming a Grass River Natural Area, Inc. volunteer is to register by completing the Volunteer Information Form on the GRNA, Inc. website. By providing us with this information we can place you on the appropriate contact list based on your availability, interests, and skills. Each volunteer will also be invited to an orientation with the volunteer coordinator to discuss the interests and skills volunteers can offer to the organization that will also enable them grow as professionals and as members of the community.

Orientation

All volunteer applicants will attend an orientation with the Volunteer Coordinator to receive an overview of GRNA, Inc., review the volunteer program and policies, and determine where each individual best fits into the volunteer program. Each volunteer will then be provided with a position description that defines specific responsibilities, clarifies expectations, and defines support that staff will provide to the volunteer. Each volunteer is selected on the basis of ability to perform the job requirements and the

willingness to participate in the training for the position. During this time the process for logging volunteer hours will also be reviewed.

Training

Some volunteer roles require specialized training before service, which for others, training is provided on the job. Training requirements are listed for each Volunteer Position Description. Volunteers who would like to participate in more than one position are expected to attend training for each position of interest. Volunteers are also encouraged to re-attend training to brush up on skills they have already been trained for. Training will be coordinated by the volunteer's supervisor.

Volunteer Position Descriptions

Category 1: Administration

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Description of position

The board supports the work of GRNA, Inc. and provides mission-based leadership and strategic governance. While day-to-day operations are led by the Executive Director, the relationship between the board and the Executive Director is a partnership, and the appropriate involvement of the board is both critical and expected.

Qualifications

- Commitment to GRNA, Inc. Mission, Vision, and Values
- Available to meet 6 times per year on a designated weekday (generally Wednesday) evening
- Available for additional meetings for Strategic Planning, Board Development, or additional board training

Required before starting service

Complete Board of Directors Application (by October 31st)

Complete interview with Executive Director &/or Governance Committee members

Successfully be nominated by GRNA, Inc. Board of Directors (in November)

Complete Volunteer Information Form

Volunteer Orientation

Volunteer Training: Board Orientation offered at beginning of year

Reports to: Executive Director

COMMITTEE MEMBER: FUND DEVELOPMENT, FINANCE, MARKETING, GOVERNANCE, OR LAND MANGEMENT

Description of Position

Committees support the work of both the Board and the staff by focusing their efforts on tasks and projects related to a specific area of focus.

Qualifications

- Commitment to GRNA, Inc. Mission, Vision, and Values
- Able to meet with committee once per month maximum
- Some experience in specific committee topic

Required before starting service

Complete Volunteer Information Form

Volunteer Orientation

Volunteer Training will be provided on the job

Reports to: Executive Director

OFFICE VOLUNTEER

Description of Position

Office volunteers help with various office jobs as needed. This work includes but is not limited to data entry, note writing, help with mailings, and filing.

Qualifications

- Basic office skills
- Computer familiarity for some tasks
- Neat handwriting for some tasks

Required before starting service

Complete Volunteer Information Form

Volunteer Orientation

Volunteer Training will be provided on the job

Reports to: Office Manager or Development Coordinator

Category 2: Education

DOCENT

Description of Position

Docents serve as interpreters for visitors, connecting them to the incredible natural world of GRNA. Working in either the Nature Center or on the trails as guides, docents share their knowledge of GRNA's ecology and history with the public. Docents also serve as the face of GRNA in many instances by serving as the first greeters for most visitors and by answering basic questions both about the natural area programs and trails as well as the surrounding community. In addition to these roles, docents may

also assist staff with event set up and preparation and help with other tasks around the Nature Center as well as be recruited as lead volunteers for select volunteer days.

Qualifications

- Knowledge of Grass River and/or the natural environment
- Ability to relate to a variety of people
- Ability to communicate both orally and in writing to GRNA, Inc. staff and the general public
- Excellent customer service skills
- Ability to learn how to conduct simple retail transactions for the Nature Center gift shop
- Basic computer skills (opening and editing spreadsheets and word documents)

Required before starting service

Complete Volunteer Information Form

Volunteer Orientation

Volunteer Training: Job shadowing with a Naturalist, training on Center operations for docents at the front desk, familiarization of GRNA and its ecology and history

Criminal Background Check for volunteers working with children

Reports to: Volunteer Coordinator but works closely with Naturalists and the Education Director

EDUCATION PROGRAM AIDE

Description of Position

Education Program Aides assist with large educational programs, including school field trips, home school programs, public programs, family festivals, and events. Volunteers provide support and assistance to Naturalists while they lead classes or events for children or adults. Assistance during field trips may include preparation of programs, distributing supplies, supervising groups of children, answering questions, redirecting students, and possibly some teaching. During larger festival events, volunteers may assist in directing visitors or leading an activity. Most programs range from 2 to 5 hours in length. The number of programs varies seasonally.

Qualifications

- Experience teaching or working with children preferred, but not required
- Knowledge of Grass River and/or the natural environment
- Ability to walk various distances over uneven surfaces and boardwalks
- Ability to work in varied temperatures
- Ability to communicate both orally and in writing to GRNA, Inc. staff and the general public

Required before starting service

Complete Volunteer Information Form

Volunteer Orientation

Volunteer Training will be provided on the job and will include how to assist with hikes, interpretation and large educational programs
Criminal Background Check for volunteers working with children

Reports to: Education Director

OUTREACH VOLUNTEER

Description of Position

Outreach volunteers serve as ambassadors to GRNA, Inc. by sharing information about who we are and what we do with the public. By being present at regional events and festivals, outreach volunteers share their knowledge of Grass River's ecology and history with the public. Outreach volunteers also serve as the face of GRNA in many instances by serving as the first point of contact for many potential visitors and by answering basic questions both about the natural area programs and trails as well as the surrounding community.

Qualifications

- Knowledge of Grass River and/or the natural environment
- Ability to relate to a variety of people
- Ability to communicate both orally and in writing to GRNA, Inc. staff and the general public
- Excellent customer service skills

Required before starting service

Complete Volunteer Information Form

Volunteer Orientation

Volunteer Training: Job shadowing one outreach event with staff

Criminal Background Check for volunteers working with children

Reports to: Volunteer Coordinator but works closely with the Education Director

Category 3: Events

RIVERFEST VOLUNTEER

Description of Position

Riverfest volunteers help to plan the annual fundraiser (held each August), which can include auction item procurement, sponsor solicitation, event planning, volunteering for set up, and/or working at the event. Volunteers may choose which ways they would like to be involved. The committee meets monthly from January to May and meetings may increase to two per month in June and July.

Qualifications

- Event planning experience is helpful but not required
- Willingness to ask for donations for some positions
- Ability to relate to a variety of people

- Ability to communicate both orally and in writing to GRNA, Inc. staff and the general public

Required before starting service

Complete Volunteer Information Form

Volunteer Orientation

Volunteer Training will be provided on the job

Reports to: Development Coordinator and Office Manager

EVENTS VOLUNTEER

Description of Position

Events Volunteers plan and execute several family-friendly events held at GRNA throughout the year, including Winterfest and the Grass River Shiver in January, Maplefest in March, Summer Kick-off in June, Autumnfest in October, and Holiday Crafts for Kids in December. Planning takes place within the Events Committee, which meets about once a month, depending on the schedule of upcoming events, and is led by a GRNA, Inc. staff member. Planning involves making decisions on dates, times, activities, refreshments, and entertainment. On the day of events, Events Volunteers may fill several roles, including checking visitors in, leading activities or games, taking photographs, or setting up and cleaning up.

Qualifications

- Event planning experience is helpful but not required
- Ability to relate to a variety of people
- Ability to communicate both orally and in writing to GRNA, Inc. staff and the general public
- Ability to create a fun, inviting, and safe atmosphere for visitors

Required before starting service

Complete Volunteer Information Form

Volunteer Orientation

Volunteer Training will be provided on the job

Criminal Background Check for volunteers working with children

Reports to: Volunteer Coordinator

Category 4: Stewardship

LAND AND TRAIL STEWARD

Description of Position

Stewards perform basic trail maintenance functions including trimming, simple boardwalk repair, removing debris, and sign replacement or installment. This position may also entail manually removing invasive plant species. Trail maintenance will be conducted using a variety of hand tools which require training on how to properly and

safely use the tools. The Land and Trail Steward may work independently or assist staff with larger stewardship projects.

Qualifications

- Ability to walk various distances over uneven surfaces and boardwalks
- Ability to work in varied temperatures
- Ability to learn and use a variety of hand tools
- Ability to work with other volunteers as well as unsupervised
- Ability to communicate both orally and in writing to GRNA, Inc. staff and the general public

Required before starting service

Complete Volunteer Information Form

Volunteer Orientation

Volunteer Training will be provided on the job and will include trail monitoring techniques, safely and properly using hand tools, and proper trimming techniques

Reports to: Land and Facilities Steward

NATIVE PLANT GARDENER

Description of Position

Native Plant Gardeners maintain the established plantings around the Nature Center, including the wetland, meadow, and serenity gardens. Gardeners will be responsible for weeding, watering, and general maintenance of the native species in our gardens. These volunteers will also have the opportunity to participate in the Nature Center Garden Club.

Qualifications

- Some familiarity with plants and gardening techniques
- Ability to bend, use garden tools, etc.
- Ability to work with other volunteers as well as unsupervised
- Ability to work in varied temperatures
- Ability to communicate both orally and in writing to GRNA, Inc. staff and the general public

Required before starting service

Complete Volunteer Information Form

Volunteer Orientation

Volunteer Training will be provided on the job and will include familiarization with the different gardens and the native plant species being represented, as well as plant care and weeding standards

Reports to: Land and Facilities Steward

FACILITIES VOLUNTEER

Description of Position

Facilities Volunteers have the opportunity to take part in a variety of maintenance, repair, and skilled trades that help to maintain and enhance our buildings. Facilities include the Nature Center, cabin, outhouses, garden shed, and barn. Examples of activities are painting outhouses, repairing a leaky toilet, replacing light bulbs/fixtures, performing routine engine maintenance, and washing windows.

Qualifications

- Some experience with mechanics, plumbing, carpentry, and/or electrical work
- Knowledge of small engine service and/or repair
- Ability to use a variety of hand tools and power tools when necessary
- Ability to bend, squat, climb ladders, etc.
- Ability to work with other volunteers as well as unsupervised
- Ability to work in varied temperatures
- Ability to communicate both orally and in writing to GRNA, Inc. staff and the general public

Required before starting service

Complete Volunteer Information Form

Volunteer Orientation

Volunteer Training will be provided on the job

Reports to: Land and Facilities Steward

PARCEL MONITOR

Description of Position

Parcel Monitors have the opportunity to contribute to an integral part of the GRNA Natural Resources Management Plan, as volunteer-led efforts to monitor the health of the natural area is a key priority. Parcel Monitors work in small teams of volunteers to walk GRNA's almost 70 parcels, collecting data on an iPad in the ArcGIS Collector app. The goal of parcel monitoring is to look for anything amiss within the natural area, including unauthorized human disturbance or invasive plants, as well as make note of interesting features that could have educational or scientific value. GRNA, Inc. attempts to monitor each parcel within the natural area at least every two years.

Qualifications

- Knowledge of Grass River and/or natural environments
- Ability to work with other volunteers as well as unsupervised
- Ability to follow strict, standardized data collection protocols
- Ability to work in varied temperatures
- Ability to walk various distances over uneven, sometimes very wet or swampy ground or boardwalks
- Ability to communicate both orally and in writing to GRNA, Inc. staff and the general public

Required before starting service

Complete Volunteer Information Form

Volunteer Orientation

Volunteer Training: Parcel monitoring protocol training

Reports to: Volunteer Coordinator

MAPLE SUGARING VOLUNTEER

Description of Position

Maple Sugaring Volunteers run our maple sugaring program, usually during February and March. Volunteers prep equipment, tap trees, collect sap, split wood, and run the maple syrup evaporator to make maple syrup. Volunteers may provide demonstrations to the public during public events. At the end of the season they assist in clean up and storage of equipment until the next season.

Qualifications

- Some familiarity with the maple sugaring process
- Ability to use basic tools like drills, hammers, and splitting mauls
- Ability to work with other volunteers as well as unsupervised
- Ability to work in cold temperatures
- Ability to communicate both orally and in writing to GRNA, Inc. staff and the general public

Required before starting service

Complete Volunteer Information Form

Volunteer Orientation

Volunteer Training will be provided on the job

Reports to: Education Director

Category 5: Citizen Science

STREAM MONITOR

Description of Position

Stream Monitors have the opportunity to contribute to an integral part of the GRNA Natural Resources Management Plan, as volunteer-led efforts to sustain and monitor the health of our streams is a key component of the management plan. Stream Monitors take part in two stream sampling events each year, one in the spring and one in the fall. Sampling involves working in a small team of volunteers to collect macroinvertebrates at a creek site and sorting through them for later identification by expert entomologists. Collected data is used to guide resource management decisions at GRNA.

Qualifications

- Knowledge of Grass River and/or natural environments
- Ability to work with other volunteers as well as unsupervised
- Ability to follow strict, standardized data collection protocols
- Ability to communicate both orally and in writing to GRNA, Inc. staff and the general public
- Ability to walk various distances over uneven surfaces or boardwalks
- Ability to work in varied temperatures

Required before starting service

Complete Volunteer Information Form

Volunteer Orientation

Volunteer Training: Attending Stream Monitoring Training, offered each May, is STRONGLY encouraged, and is required for team leaders

Reports to: Volunteer Coordinator

VERNAL POOL MONITOR

Description of Position

Vernal Pools are ephemeral wetlands that fill with water in the spring and usually dry out by late summer. They are critical breeding habitat for many rare animals, including fairy shrimp and several species of amphibians and reptiles. Vernal Pool Monitors have the opportunity to contribute to an integral part of the GRNA Natural Resources Management Plan, as volunteer-led efforts to sustain and monitor natural features like vernal pools is a key component of the management plan. Vernal Pool Monitors collect data at one or more of GRNA's vernal pools three times throughout the year, twice in the spring and once in the late summer or fall to verify pool drying. Collected data is used to guide resource management decisions at GRNA.

Qualifications

- Knowledge of Grass River and/or the natural environment
- Ability to work with other volunteers as well as unsupervised
- Ability to follow strict, standardized data collection protocols
- Ability to communicate both orally and in writing to GRNA, Inc. staff and the general public
- Ability to walk various distances over uneven surfaces or boardwalks
- Ability to work in varied temperatures

Required before starting service

Complete Volunteer Information Form

Volunteer Orientation

Volunteer Training: Attend the Vernal Pool Monitoring training, offered each spring

Reports to: Volunteer Coordinator

BUTTERFLY MONITOR

Description of Position

Butterfly Monitors have the opportunity to contribute to an integral part of the GRNA Natural Resources Management Plan, as volunteer-led efforts to sustain and monitor biological diversity is a key component of the management plan. Butterfly Monitors adopt a section of trail and walk it regularly throughout the summer, identifying and documenting butterfly populations for the Michigan Butterfly Network, a statewide program that aims to collect data on the distribution and abundance of butterflies across Michigan. Collected data is used to guide resource management decisions at GRNA.

Qualifications

- Knowledge of Grass River and/or the natural environment
- Ability to work with other volunteers as well as unsupervised
- Ability to follow strict, standardized data collection protocols
- Ability to communicate both orally and in writing to GRNA, Inc. staff and the general public
- Ability to walk various distances over uneven surfaces or boardwalks
- Ability to work in varied temperatures

Required before starting service

Complete Volunteer Information Form

Volunteer Orientation

Volunteer Training: Attend a Michigan Butterfly Network training session, offered each spring

Reports to: Volunteer Coordinator and Education Director

Grass River Natural Area Volunteer Policies

Equality

All volunteers will be recruited, placed, trained, and supervised in all positions without regard to their race, religion, national origin, ancestry, gender, age, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, genetic information, military status or other protected class status.

Volunteer Safety

The safety of our volunteers is our primary concern at Grass River Natural Area, Inc. Please adhere to the following guidelines when participating in volunteer activities and events:

- You know your health and physical limitations better than anyone. If at any point during a volunteer activity it is becoming too strenuous or tiring, please

inform a GRNA, Inc. staff member immediately. Your safety and health are our priority.

- If you have a medical condition or allergy that may inhibit or cause harm to you during a volunteer event, please come prepared with medication or other personal requirements and inform a GRNA, Inc. staff member of your medical condition prior to volunteering.
- Dress appropriately for all volunteer events. Especially for outdoor activities, consider long pants and appropriate footwear. Open toed shoes are discouraged. Depending on the volunteer activity you may also need insect repellent and sunscreen.
- If an injury occurs while volunteering at a Grass River event, no matter how small, please inform a GRNA, Inc. staff member.
- While out on volunteer assignment, if you encounter or witness any urgent problems or threatening situations, (off road vehicles, fire, weapons, hunting/trapping, unknown hazardous material or pollutant) immediately remove yourself to a safe distance and contact a member of GRNA, Inc. staff and the police if warranted. Your safety is the most important consideration. Do not try to confront anyone in the natural area who is participating in illegal activities.

Hunting Season

Hunting is permitted on GRNA property outside of the education zone, including in the areas surrounding the Algonquin Trail and the Rail Trail. Please do not monitor these areas during hunting season.

Use of Tools and Equipment

GRNA, Inc. provides most of the tools needed for scheduled work days, although volunteers are periodically asked to bring their own equipment. GRNA, Inc. assumes no financial responsibility for the loss or damage of personal equipment or items brought to the site by volunteers. Every attempt will be made by GRNA, Inc. to provide equipment needed for completion of assigned volunteer duties.

Waivers

All volunteers are required to read and sign the GRNA, Inc. liability waiver prior to volunteering on GRNA property. Volunteers are also required to review and sign the GRNA, Inc. liability waiver once a year after their start date. Volunteers under the age of 18 must have a form signed by their parent or legal guardian permitting them to volunteer. Volunteers under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult during volunteer activities.

Vehicle Use

Insurance of vehicles is the responsibility of the owner; GRNA, Inc. assumes no responsibility for the loss or damage of such vehicles. Volunteers shall not transport visitors to or from the site.

Unlawful Harassment

Unlawful harassment refers to harassment on the basis of race, religion, national origin, ancestry, gender, age, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, genetic information, military status or other protected class status. Unlawful harassment includes sexual harassment, as defined below. Harassment can include slurs, jokes, obscene gestures or degrading comments concerning protected characteristics. It is not possible to list all of the circumstances that may constitute unlawful harassment. The following are examples of conduct that, depending upon the severity and pervasiveness, if unwelcome, may constitute unlawful harassment:

- Comments, jokes, teasing, or verbal abuse directed at a person or persons because of his/her/their protected class status
- Distributing or displaying through any means, including electronic communications (e.g., email, instant or text messages, the Internet, voice mail, or facsimile), messages, objects, pictures, cartoons, or other materials that are degrading or offensive to a protected class
- Implicit or explicit threats directed at a person or persons because of his/her/their protected class status
- Adverse actions including a disciplinary warning to a volunteer or termination from a volunteer position based upon a person's protected class status

Sexual Harassment

The legal definition of sexual harassment is broad and includes harassment by employees or others in the workplace or at work sites. While it is not possible to list all circumstances that may constitute sexual harassment, the following are some examples of conduct that, depending on the severity and pervasiveness, if unwelcome, may constitute sexual harassment:

- A supervisor makes direct or implied requests for sexual favors in exchange for actual or promised volunteer benefits
- A volunteer engages in a pattern of unwelcome sexual language, body gestures, and conduct that is so severe and pervasive it interferes with the job performance of volunteers

Conduct that is sexually harassing can include:

- Repeated unwelcome flirtation, advances, or propositions
- Sexually graphic or degrading comments about an volunteer's appearance, dress, or anatomy
- Verbal abuse with graphic sexual connotations
- Persistent display of graphic, sexually suggestive objects or pictures

- Repeated offensive bodily gestures
- Insensitive or intrusive questions about another individual's personal life
- Exposing private areas of the body
- Unwelcome leering, whistling, brushing against the body, touching, hugging, kissing, patting, stroking, fondling, pinching, or tugging at clothing
- Transmitting sexually suggestive voicemail, text messages, instant messages, or e-mails or downloading, transmitting and displaying sexually suggestive materials from the Internet or other source

Retaliation

It is a violation of GRNA, Inc. policy and also unlawful to retaliate against any volunteer for making or filing a good faith complaint of harassment. Any such retaliation will not be tolerated and will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

Complaint Process

Volunteers who believe they have been subjected to harassment by a supervisor, staff person, or any other person with whom they come in contact in connection with their GRNA, Inc. work should immediately report the incident to his/her/their supervisor or a member of the GRNA, Inc. Executive Committee.

Drug/Tobacco Use

Volunteers shall not possess, use, consume, sell, transfer, exchange, or distribute any illegal drugs, drug paraphernalia, or alcoholic beverages while engaged in GRNA, Inc. business or on GRNA, Inc. or Antrim County property. Volunteers shall not perform work under the influence of drugs or alcohol in any manner that may impair their ability to safely perform their position duties or that may jeopardize the safety of staff, other volunteers, the public, or property. The policy of GRNA, Inc. has zero tolerance to the misuse and abuse of alcohol, illegal drugs, and prescription drugs.

The use of alcohol or tobacco products (including cigarettes, chewing tobacco, and cigarettes) on Antrim County and GRNA, Inc. property is prohibited. This rule is consistent with Antrim County Ordinance #1 of 1988, which governs the use of GRNA.

Criminal Background Check

Volunteer applicants that work in any capacity with children will be required to consent to a criminal history records check. Volunteering for our education programs and for our family-friendly events is contingent upon a satisfactory criminal history report.

All prospective volunteers have the right to be treated fairly and to have their privacy respected. Prospective volunteers will have the opportunity to challenge the accuracy of information received. The applicant must resolve any dispute with the criminal justice agency from which GRNA, Inc. received information. Until GRNA, Inc. receives

a correction from the criminal history record repository, it will assume that the original information is correct.

Information received will remain confidential and will be destroyed when no longer needed. Grass River Natural Area, Inc. assures that all information attained from the reference and background check process will be used only as part of the volunteer process and kept strictly confidential. Volunteer applicants will be permanently disqualified from volunteer service if their criminal records include any of the following:

- Past history of sexual abuse of children
- Conviction for any crime in which children were involved
- History of any violence or sexually exploitive behavior
- This list is not all-inclusive but rather illustrative of the types of factors that may be considered.

Grass River Natural Area, Inc. Volunteer Release and Waiver of Liability

Please read carefully. This is a legal document that affects your legal rights.

Grass River Natural Area, Inc. encourages and supports volunteers. I volunteer my time and my services because of my support of the Grass River Natural Area, Inc. (GRNA, Inc.) and because of my desire to participate actively in the furtherance of the work of GRNA, Inc. Therefore, I do freely, voluntarily, and without duress execute this Release and acknowledge the following terms:

1. Waiver and Release. I hereby release, waive, discharge and covenant not to sue GRNA, Inc., its officers, directors, employees and agents, from any and all liability to me, for all losses, injury, death or damage, and any claims or demands thereto, on account of injury to person or property, or resulting in my death in reference to the activities authorized in my work as a volunteer. I hereby covenant and agree to indemnify and save harmless, GRNA, Inc., its officers, directors, employees and agents, from any and all claims or demands, for all loss, injury, death or damage, made by or through myself arising out of any occurrence related my work as a volunteer.

2. Medical Treatment. I release and discharge GRNA, Inc. from any claim that arises or may arise due to any first aid, medical treatment, or service rendered to me.

3. Assumption of Risk. I understand that my work for GRNA, Inc. may include activities that may be hazardous. I assume the risk of injury or harm in those activities I choose to do and release the GRNA, Inc. from all liability for injury, illness, death, or property damage occurring from my work for GRNA, Inc. I will not accept a work assignment for which I do not believe I have had adequate training or which I do not believe I am physically capable of performing.

4. Insurance. GRNA, Inc. does not have responsibility for providing any health, medical or disability insurance coverage for me. IT IS MY RESPONSIBILITY AS A VOLUNTEER TO ENSURE I HAVE MEDICAL/HEALTH INSURANCE.

5. Criminal Background Check. If I am an adult volunteering for a position that involves contact with children, I understand that a State of Michigan Criminal Background Check will be conducted, and I hereby consent to this check. All information obtained by Grass River Natural Area, Inc. will be confidential.

6. Confidentiality. The necessity for maintaining confidentiality regarding Grass River Natural Area, Inc. is a fundamental policy of the organization. Volunteers may not during or after service divulge to anyone except Board members or employees of Grass River Natural Area, Inc. who are entitled thereto, any information that has been identified by the Board of Directors or the Executive Director as "confidential" or can by a reasonable interpretation be deemed confidential. This includes information that is not otherwise public information and was acquired through the employee's connection with Grass River Natural Area, Inc. This includes, but is not limited to the following: employee personal information, financial information about GRNA, Inc., individual

information about clients served, individual information about donors, and details regarding employment issues, and strategic or operational plans.

7. Compensation. I acknowledge that I am not an employee of GRNA, Inc. and am not entitled to be compensated for services rendered on behalf of GRNA, Inc.

8. Photograph/Image Release. As a GRNA, Inc. volunteer, I understand that my image, including photographs, video images and any reproductions thereof, may be used for any legal purpose of the Grass River Natural Area including – but not limited to – advertising, brochures, fliers and for general media purposes. By signing this document:

- I consent to the use of photographs, video images and any reproductions thereof by GRNA, Inc., and its affiliates, for use in any from pertinent to the operation of same, or any other legal purposes.
- I also consent to the use of my name in connection herewith.
- I agree that all images shall become the property of GRNA, Inc.
- I understand this document becomes effective upon signing this release and covers images taken during my volunteer status at GRNA, Inc. and that the images taken during this time may be used at any time, with or without my knowledge, from that point forward, regardless of my volunteer status.

9. Discrimination Laws. I agree to follow GRNA, Inc.'s policy along with state and federal laws that forbid discrimination in employment, education, housing, public accommodation, law enforcement or public service based on a person's religion, race, color, national origin, age, sex, marital status, height, weight or disability.

10. In-Kind Service. GRNA, Inc. is eligible for some grants that require GRNA, Inc. to match the dollars received from the grant. Many of these grants allow GRNA, Inc. to use in-kind services as a portion of this match instead of actual dollars. I understand that my volunteer time may be used as an in-kind service to help GRNA, Inc. earn its match for some grants from federal or other sources. By signing this form, I consent to the use of my volunteer time as a possible in-kind match for grants received by GRNA, Inc.

11. Other. I agree that this Release is intended to be as broad and inclusive as permitted by the laws of Michigan and that this Release is governed by and will be interpreted according to the laws of Michigan. I understand that should any part of this Release be ruled invalid by a court, the other parts will remain valid and continue to be in effect.

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature (parent/guardian, if a minor): _____

Emergency Contact Information

Primary Emergency Contact: _____

Relationship: _____

Phone:

Cell _____ Home _____ Work _____