

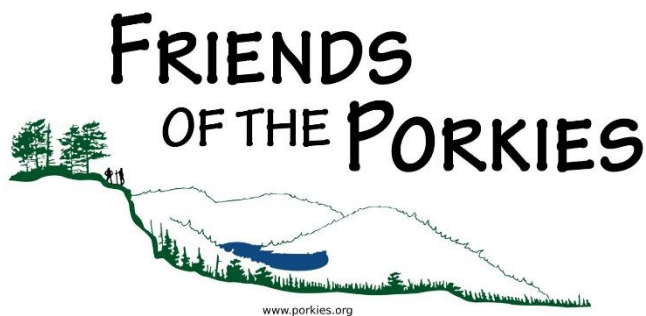
Friends of the Porkies Volunteer Handbook

Friends of the Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park



Photo by Michelle Luetke

Volunteer Handbook



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Friends of the Porkies Volunteer Handbook

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Welcome

Thank you for your interest in volunteering with the Friends of the Porkies. As a volunteer, you help us *connect people to the magic of the Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park*.

We offer many exciting ways to get involved—from serving as a board member or Folk School host to taking tickets at the Music Fest, helping with trail maintenance, supporting the archery program, or donating books to our Little Free Library boxes. There's truly something for everyone!

If you're interested in volunteering on a short-term basis, consider signing up for a trail maintenance day or helping at a special event. It's a great way to get your feet wet and join us in the park.

Visit our **“How to Get Involved”** section to find an opportunity that fits your interests and personality. If you haven't already, please complete the volunteer form at the link below, and we'll be in touch soon.

www.porkies.org/how-you-can-help/volunteer

Our volunteers make everything we do possible and help enrich the experience of everyone who visits the park.

Thank you for joining our team,

Friends of the Porkies

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About the Organization

The Friends of the Porkies is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization whose mission is connecting people to the magic of the Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park.

Mission Statement

Connecting People to the Magic of the Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park

Background

The Friends of the Porkies has deep roots. Local citizens interested in the land that would become the Porkies started the movement to create the park in the early 1940's. In 1945, support by the legendary conservationist Aldo Leopold led to the creation of Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park

From its beginnings as the Porcupine Mountains Ski Club, the Friends has evolved into a volunteer organization that continues to grow and take on projects at the Porkies. You can follow our progress in our newsletter, the Quill, on our website www.porkies.org, and on our Facebook page.

Community/Park Impact

The Friends of the Porkies seeks to inspire appreciation of wilderness for youth and visitor experiences all year round at the Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park.

Goals for the Future

- Create succession plan for each program
- Ensure funding to sustain programs
- Ensure maintenance of facilities to meet needs of program operation
- Increase recruitment and retention of volunteers
- Expand outreach and improve communication
- Expand and strengthen collaboration/partnerships

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How to Get Involved

You can volunteer to help the Friends and the Park in every season and in many ways. Listed below are some of our current volunteer opportunities.

- **Administrative Support (Mailings, Grant Writing, etc.)**
- [Artist in Residence Program](#)
- **Copper Fest (July)**
- [Kurt Blake Helmet Fund](#)
- **Labor Day Events (September)**
- [Park Naturalist Program](#)
- [Porcupine Mountains Music Festival \(August\)](#)
- [Porkies Folk School](#)
- **Roadside Litter Pick-up (May)**
- **Summer Solstice Event (June)**
- [Trail Maintenance](#)
- [Youth Programs](#)

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Programs and Initiatives

Artist-in-Residence Program

The Artist-in-Residence program at Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park is open to artists and artisans whose work can be influenced by this unique northern wilderness setting. It offers writers, composers, and all visual and performing artists and artisans the opportunity to experience the natural beauty of the Porkies and express it through their art form.

As part of the Artist Residency, the artists provide a free public presentation at the Folk School demonstrating some aspects of their art. Each artist is also required to submit a donated piece of artwork which is displayed at the Visitor Center and other venues.

The Mission of the AIR Program - “To offer residencies to new and established artists of recognized excellence from around the world to pursue their creative process in a wilderness environment.” The selected artists stay at Dan’s cabin for 2 to 3 weeks. The rustic cabin was constructed by Friends of the Porkies volunteers.

Volunteers are needed for the following:

- AIR committee members. Members review applications and jury the artwork submitted by the artists applying for the residency, Volunteer to be a host for each artist – greet, orientate, answer questions and be the point person during their stay. Assist with communication with the selected artists
- Coordinator for the artist’s public presentation
- Assistance with artwork displays
- Open and close Dan’s cabin and perform light housekeeping between each artist
- Perform periodic maintenance tasks



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Porcupine Mountains Folk School

The Porcupine Mountains Folk School is located in the historical carpenter shop building located near the Union Bay Campground and offers seasonal classes in woodworking, fiber arts, basketry, snowshoe lacing, watercolors, mixed media, fused glass and more. Classes are offered for all ages and skill levels. Instructors are highly skilled and make learning fun.

Volunteers are needed for the following:

- Folk School Class Host – each class we offer has a volunteer host who greets the instructor and students, sets up the classroom and refreshments, assists as needed during the class, and cleans up when class is over. Training is provided for each volunteer.
- Summer Solstice in June – helping with set up, games, clean up, program, refreshments and more.
- Open House in July - helping with set up, activities, clean up, refreshments and more.
- Folk School Committee – each member works with the team to secure instructors, hosts and students; to schedule classes, and to maintain the building and supplies. The committee meets once a month as needed.



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Porcupine Mountain Music Festival

The Porcupine Mountains Music Festival, presented by the Friends of the Porkies is held on the last weekend in August. The line-up is generally announced in the Spring. This activity has been supported in part by an award from the Michigan Arts and Culture Council and donations.

The Festival made state history in 2005, as the first music festival held in a Michigan State Park. Performers arrive from all over the Country and abroad to bring to the Porkies' stage a diverse selection of musical styles: Americana, blues, country, bluegrass, rock, folk and more.

2026 marks the festival's 20th anniversary (gap year due to covid) with an outdoor main stage, indoor chalet stage and an all acoustic "Busking Barn" stage. The colorful "Kid's Tent" located on the festival grounds is always bustling with crafts and activities for the young audience members.

Volunteers are needed for the following:

- Artist Liaison
- Campground Hosts
- First Aid
- Front Gate – Tickets and Wrist Bands
- Hospitality
- Kid's Tent
- Merchandise
- Parking – Transportation
- Photography
- Stage Crew
- MC Chalet Stage
- Crew Chiefs
- Security
- Set Up/Take Down



Joyann Parker – photo credit Dave Braithwaite

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Porcupine Mountain Wilderness State Park Trail Fund

With over 90 miles of hiking trails which include 26 miles of cross-country ski trails to maintain, the Friends is recruiting trail clearing maintenance volunteers for the park. Every fall, volunteers will clear the trails.

We are looking for volunteers with chainsaw experience, swampers to remove the cut-up shrubs or tree lengths, and anybody that can wield a lopper to trim back vegetation. The Friends is also looking for volunteers who can help with clearing the trails after weather events. If you have experience with a chainsaw or can help move cut up tree lengths, we are recruiting to create a list of trail helpers that can be contacted for emergency help.

Donations of \$25 and greater receive a unique annual trail sticker.

Volunteer today for future needs.

- Trail committee works with park staff
- Trail clearing after weather events
- Trail maintenance days



Kurt Blake Helmet Fund

The Friends encourages skiing safety by reimbursing a person, age 18 or younger, \$50 toward the purchase of a ski helmet at the Winter Complex Ski Shop. Pick up and fill out a form at the Ski Shop. Over the years, donations have funded the purchase of over 300 helmets for youth from the region. Kurt Blake's family and the Friends of the Porkies established the Kurt Blake Helmet Fund in 2008 in memory of Kurt, an Ontonagon youngster who loved to ski and who died in March 2008, following a tragic skiing accident. A skier for all of his short life, Kurt played at the Porkies Ski Hill and worked at the Winter Complex Ski Shop.

Volunteers are needed to help spread the word!



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Park Naturalist Programs

Over the years, the Friends has supported the park's interpretive program. The Friends writes grants so the park can address interpretive program needs. Using funds received from Copper Shores Community Health Foundation grant, the Friends purchased kerosene lanterns for the lantern lit ski and snowshoe hikes and adjustable snowshoe poles for the "Snowshoe Hike with a Ranger". Helping the Park provide high quality interpretation is an important goal of the Friends.

Equipment purchased for the Youth Programs is also used for the Park's interpretive programs. Through donations to the Friends, binoculars, bird books, compasses, archery equipment and trailer, hiking backpacks and more have been purchased to enhance the park experience.

Volunteers are needed to:

- Run an activity during busy event days such as Smokey Bear Day, Exploring Fishing Day and Snowburst
- Help on Stewardship Days such as the annual Beach Clean Ups or Invasive Plant picks.



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Youth Programs

Since 2011, local schools have received funds from the Friends and matching grants to provide field trips to the Porkies. The Porkies Interpretation Staff have multiple program options for teachers to choose from when they come. These Friends supported programs start with visits to local schools in Gogebic and Ontonagon Counties.

An age-appropriate lesson is presented to students by Katie Urban, Park Interpreter with a Friends volunteer assisting with set up. Once the lesson is in progress, the Friends volunteer and teacher step out to discuss field trip choices, and the school bus funds application process. A team of two volunteers is our goal. Classroom visits start in late March and continue through early May.

Following the classroom fun day, teachers complete the online DNR Field Trip request form and work with the Park Interpreter on defining dates and the program. Field trips are held in mid-May, September and October. The students arrive at the Porkies with a teacher and chaperones. Volunteer help is always welcome. The Friends purchase materials and equipment for the interpreter to use in the classroom, at the park, and with visitors all summer.



Volunteers are needed to:

- Assist with classroom visits at schools (this is usually a full day)
- Assist with DNR field trip programs, especially archery, orienteering, birds, discovering copper, and river hunt
- Help with inventory of supplies at the end of the season

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Volunteer Policy - Code of Conduct

1. **Respect and Dignity:** Volunteers are expected to treat all individuals with respect, courtesy and dignity, regardless of their background or circumstances.
2. **Integrity and Honesty:** Volunteers are expected to act honestly and ethically in all interactions, maintaining transparency and accountability.
3. **Non-Discrimination:** A commitment to inclusivity, ensuring that volunteers do not discriminate against others based on race, gender, religion or any other characteristic.
4. **Commitment and Communication:** Volunteers must commit to the duration of the project they signed up for and notify project leaders if they need to leave early. Communication is key to sustaining the organization.
5. **Health and Safety:** Volunteers should take personal responsibility for their health and well-being before and during volunteer activities. This includes following safety protocol and reporting any issues.
6. **Confidentiality:** Volunteers must respect the confidentiality of sensitive information and only disclose it when authorized or required by law.
7. **Compliance with Laws and Policies:** Volunteers should adhere to all applicable laws and organizational policies including the MI DNR rules and regulations while performing their duties. They should also report any misconduct or issues they observe.
8. Volunteers agree to sign the [MI DNR Volunteer Release and Waiver of Liability form](#).
9. Volunteer badges should be worn when applicable.

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Recording and Reporting Volunteer Hours

All volunteers are required to keep track of their volunteer hours, mileage and any in-kind contributions that they make to the Friends of the Porkies. These hours are extremely valuable for grant writing/reporting and internal analysis.

What to track:

Hours – all hours spent volunteering on-site or doing work for the Friends of the Porkies.

Ex: 4 hours of volunteering for the Music Festival should be reported

Mileage – any miles you put on your personal vehicle while doing volunteer work for the Friends.

Ex: mileage you incurred while driving to and from the Music Festival for volunteer work should be reported.

In-Kind – any purchase of food or other items which you donate to the Friends.

Ex: 1 gallon of lemonade at \$5.99 for the Folk School Open House (given as a donation) should be reported as In-Kind dollars.

How to track:

One-time event – send an email to friendsofporkies@gmail.com stating:

Name, date and number of hours, miles and/or in-kind donations.

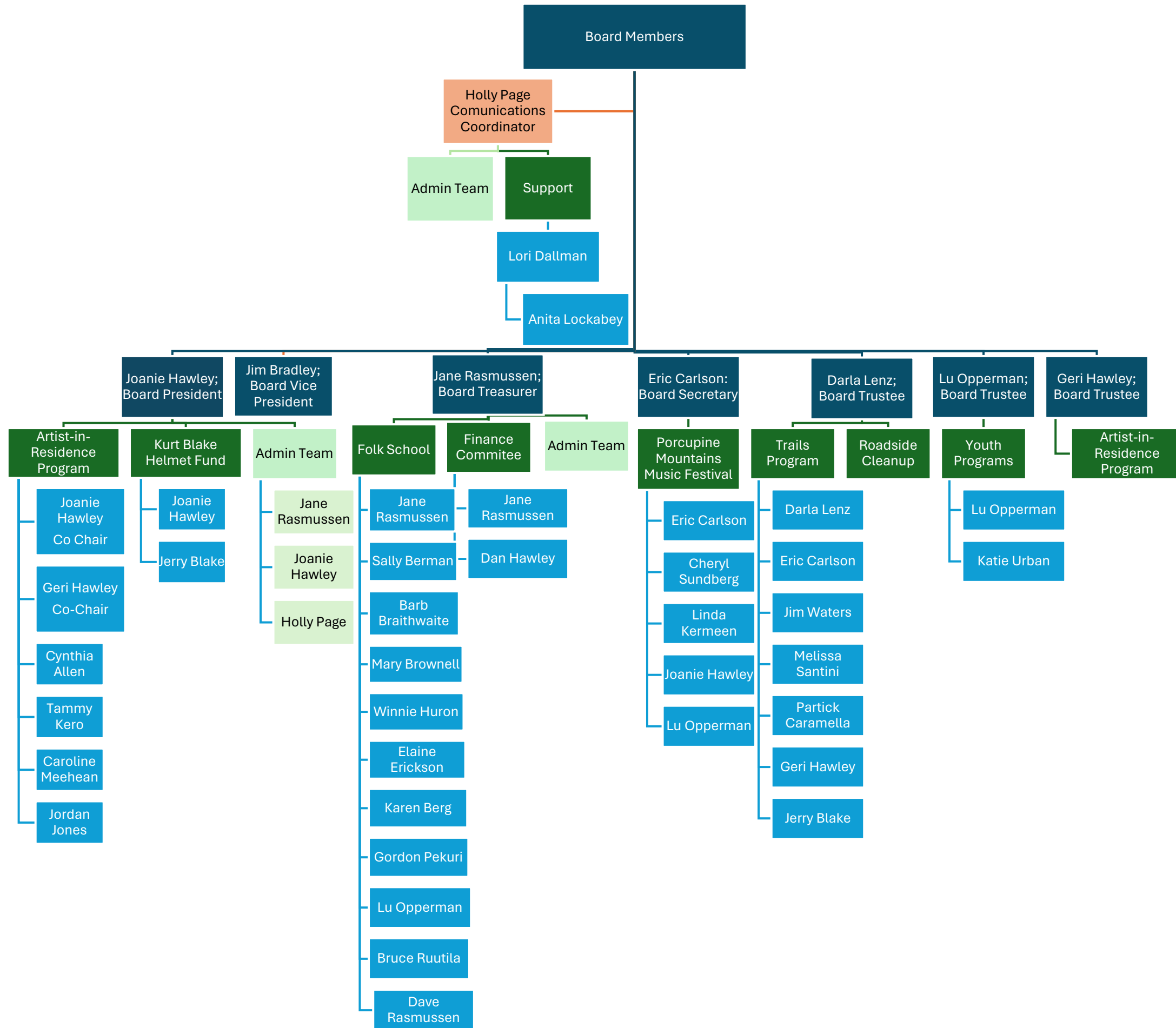
Recurring event – send a MONTHLY email to friendsofporkies@gmail.com stating:

Name, total hours, miles and in-kind donations for the month.

Reminders of things to track:

- Cost of cookies donated for Folk School students
- Hours and mileage for volunteer events such as road-side clean up
- Time spent at meetings or hosting events
- Time spent assisting with mailings
- Development of brochures and other materials

Friends of the Porkies - Organizational Chart 2026





VOLUNTEER RELEASE AND WAIVER OF LIABILITY

Required by authority of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, for volunteer assignment consideration.

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

The State of Michigan, as an Equal Opportunity Institution, complies with federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and harassment, including Title IV and Title VII (with amendments) of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Title IX of the Educational Amendment of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Veterans Readjustment Act of 1974 as amended 38 USC 20-12 and the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990. It is the policy of the State that no person, on the basis of race, sex, height, weight, color, religion, national origin or ancestry, age, marital status, disability or veteran status, shall be discriminated against in educational programs, activities, and employment.

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) encourages and supports volunteers. As a volunteer, I have an important role in providing services and programs to the public.

I want to work as a volunteer for the Michigan DNR which appoints people like me to serve and to help the Michigan DNR. While I am serving as a volunteer, I have the same immunity from civil liability under Michigan law as an employee of the Michigan DNR. After becoming a volunteer, the Michigan DNR will provide me with support, supervision, training, and supplies for me to accomplish my assigned tasks.

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 the State of Michigan, its departments, officers, 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, the State of Michigan, its departments, officers, employees and agents, from any and all claims and demands, for all loss, injury, death or damage, that any person or entity may have or make, in any manner, arising out of any occurrence related to the activities authorized in my work as a volunteer.
- 2. Medical treatment.** I release and discharge Michigan DNR from any claim that arises or may arise due to any first aid, medical treatment, or service rendered to me. I understand that I may not be entitled to workers' compensation.
- 3. Assumption of risk.** I understand that my work for the Michigan DNR 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 Michigan DNR from all liability for injury, illness, death, or property damage occurring from my work for the Michigan DNR.
- 4. Insurance.** The Michigan DNR 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.** As with other members of the public, I may file a claim with the State Administrative Board for personal losses that are under \$1,000.
- 5. Photographic release.** I grant to Michigan DNR the right to use photographic images and video or audio recordings of me that are made by Michigan DNR or others during my work assignment for Michigan DNR, including royalties, proceeds or other benefits from use of the photographs or recordings.
- 6. Copyright laws.** I understand that showing videos in public that are intended for home viewing is prohibited under the U.S. copyright laws.
- 7. Background check.** I understand that a criminal history check may be obtained prior to my appointment as a volunteer. My signature below certifies that I agree to a criminal history check and agree to provide Michigan DNR with my date of birth.
- 8. Discrimination laws.** I agree to follow Michigan DNR'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.
- 9. In-kind service.** The Michigan DNR is eligible for some grants that require that the grant dollars received be matched by the Michigan DNR. Many grants allow the use of in-kind services as a portion of this match in lieu of actual dollars. My signature certifies that I consent to the use of my volunteer time as a possible in-kind match for grants received by the Michigan DNR.
- 10. 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.

VOLUNTEER

GROUP/ORGANIZATION

DATE(S) VOLUNTEERING

Name (please print)

Group/Organization Name

From

Signature

Signature of Parent/Guardian or Group Leader

To

Date of Birth



EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

EMERGENCY CONTACT

PHONE NUMBER

ROUND-TRIP TRAVEL TIME

STEWARDSHIP VOLUNTEER INFORMATION

If you would like to keep informed of future *STEWARDSHIP* volunteer opportunities please fill in as much information below as you would like.

ADDRESS			
CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE	COUNTY
HOME #	EMAIL ADDRESS		
WORK #	FAX #		
CELL #			
GROUP NAME & YOUR AFFILIATION (if applicable)			