



NELL'S WOODLAND

Our Mission

The mission of the Nell's Woodland Foundation is to provide programs that support stewardship in the areas of Ecology, Wellness, and the Arts. Using our 60-acre preserve as an essential platform for our work, we offer programmatic gathering spaces, a diverse range of self-directed recreational and social activities, and opportunities to forge new ideas, relationships, and partnerships.

Our Vision

Engaging the beauty, peace, and serenity of nature to empower wellbeing and growth.

Our Spheres of Stewardship

The Foundation takes pride in being a steward of our inspiring 60 -acre nature preserve while providing the opportunity for our community to experience the peace and enchantment of the landscape. Our connectedness to nature is accomplished through our three spheres of stewardship: Ecology, Health & Wellness, and the Arts.



Ecology



Health &
Wellness



The Arts

Ecology Stewardship

The Foundation's passion for ecology is rooted in our belief that appreciation, respect, and understanding of the elements that surround us will enhance the lands as well as our bodies and souls. Its with this belief that we want to connect our community to the Woodlands through education and observation.

At the Woodlands we:

- Encourage our guests to discover the wonders of the natural world through experiential and educational activities. Whether this is a serene walk through the grounds or a class with one of our experts, experiencing and learning about the natural elements is the goal.
- Focus on the restoration and awakening of the biodiversity of the preserve ecosystem. The LaSalle County landscape was originally home to a myriad of indigenous wildlife and it is the Foundation's honor to help restore and cultivate the ecosystem that is native to the area.
- Collaborate with a coalition of interdisciplinary individuals, organizations, and community members to assist in the ongoing protection and preservation of the wildlife and ecology in our community. Our network of passionate experts and community aficionados is what helps drive our continual growth and improvement.

Health & Wellness Stewardship

We believe that connecting with nature is beneficial for the well-being of both humans and the natural world. It's been shown to lower stress, blood pressure and heart rate, while encouraging physical activity and buoying mood and mental health. Some research even suggests that green space is associated with a lower risk of developing psychiatric disorders — all findings that doctors are increasingly taking seriously and relaying to their patients. A new study published in the International Journal of Environmental Health Research adds to the evidence and shows just how little time it takes to get the benefits of being outside. Spending just 20 minutes in a park — even if you don't exercise while you're there — is enough to improve well-being, according to the research. Personal wellness education better positions people of all ages to develop and achieve their goals, develop healthy lifestyle habits, make healthy and informed decisions, and contributes to overall happiness.

Its with this belief that the Foundation is committed to comprehensive health education that promotes healthy habits and healthy relationships. We offer this through classes, seminars, and local resources who are available in the Wellness Center.

Arts Stewardship

Art at the Woodlands encourages a strong reciprocal relationship between people and the landscape as expressed through their artform of choice whether it be in the Fine Arts or performing arts. Nature has the capacity to inspire, promote curiosity, and generate creative ways of thinking and its our belief that the Woodlands will be an exceptional place of inspiration for our artists.

We will convene artists across a myriad of disciplines, helping our guests and participants explore subjects through an inquiry-based approach.

Our Commitment to Sustainability

The Nell's Woodland Foundation's Commitment to Sustainability unites the efforts of our team and stakeholders to support, enlighten, and encourage practices at the Woodlands and in our community that sustains, preserves, regenerates, and protects our natural resources and the environment. Ongoing operational efforts will employ Sustainability as a priority.

Everything from the design of the buildings to the ongoing operational efforts have prioritized sustainability as a focus. We have a minimal-impact design of the site's development which is complementary to our use of energy-efficient construction and regenerative initiatives. Additionally, we will demonstrate our ongoing commitment to sustainable practices through the development of on-site energy production to offset our consumption, embracing water use reduction strategies, the preservation of natural habitats, and responsible waste management.

WELCOME!

Welcome to Nell's Woodland! Thank you for choosing to volunteer with us! As a volunteer, you are part of a team of staff and volunteers who are working hard to preserve and protect our open lands and restore them to their native habitats. You are also part of a team who is working to educate the public on the conservation movement, concerning both our natural and cultural history. Every volunteer position, although different, is a vital aspect in helping us achieve our goals and continue to grow. We appreciate the valuable resources you bring to us and your commitment and dedication. Thank you!

Nell's Woodland plans to protect and enhance plant and animal life so that present and future generations can enjoy their wonders. Areas have been set aside for potential programs in the Ecology, Wellness and the Arts with a majority of the lands deliberately left as natural as possible. Since many species of trees, shrubs, flowers, birds and animals are rapidly becoming extinct the help of all is needed to preserve them.

Volunteer Mission Statement:

It shall be the mission of the Volunteer Office to provide a structured and qualified volunteer workforce who will help advance the overall mission of the Woodland.

What Does It Take to Be a Volunteer?

A volunteer with Nell's Woodland is defined as a person who donates his or her time and effort to help Nell's Woodland fulfill our mission. This may include assisting in environmental education programs, natural areas management, cultural preservation and/or public relations.

The Nell's Foundation requires an individual be at least 16 years of age to volunteer. However, there are activities appropriate for younger individuals and groups if they are accompanied by an adult and have permission in writing from a parent/guardian. Individuals volunteering for a steward position Co-stewards and apprentice stewards may be 18 years and older.

Volunteer Opportunities

Education Volunteers

Cultural Preservation Volunteers

Natural Areas Management Volunteers

Public Safety Volunteers

Trails and Recreation Volunteers

Nature Programs Volunteer

Position Description

Purpose of Volunteer Service: To present basic concepts of ecology and natural history to school and general public using hands-on activities and interpretive techniques.

Supervisors: Naturalist, Volunteer Coordinator

Typical Assignment: Lead students on interpretive hikes through our woodland.

Nature Center Host Volunteer

Position Description

Purpose of Volunteer Service: To greet Ecology Center visitors, answer questions, concerns and present basic concepts of the Woodland ecology and natural history on request. Volunteers greet in the lobby, assist with questions and concerns, and engage with visitors within the woodland.

Supervisors: Naturalist, Volunteer Coordinator

Typical Assignment: Serve as a Nature Center host/hostess on weekends and/or weekdays

Special Events Volunteer

Position Description

Purpose of Volunteer Service: To assist staff in offering seasonal special events for the general public.

Supervisors: Naturalist, Volunteer Coordinator

Typical Assignment: Work at an assigned station during a special event, helping to set-up, greet visitors, assist visitors with the activity at your station and help to clean up after the event is over.

Steward Volunteer

Position Description

Purpose of Volunteer Service: To assist with the multi-faceted efforts of restoring, protecting and perpetuating native ecosystems consistent with Nell's natural areas management program. To share knowledge obtained with volunteers, staff and the public.

Supervisors: Restoration Ecologist, Volunteer Coordinator

Typical Assignment: The management of our site, working with the restoration staff to meet the goals for annual management

Training: Stewards begin as apprentice stewards, working with a mentor steward for one to three years. Volunteers are required to attend the Volunteer Orientation and will receive hands-on training in the field.

Apprentice Steward Volunteer

Position Description

Purpose of Volunteer Service: To learn the multi-faceted efforts of restoring, protecting and perpetuating native ecosystems consistent with Nell's natural areas management program. To share knowledge with other volunteers, staff and the public. To achieve the status of full volunteer steward.

Supervision: Site Steward, Restoration Ecologist, Volunteer Coordinator

Typical Assignment: To cut brush, build burn piles, pull herbaceous weeds, harvest seed and perform other tasks during restoration workdays. Work closely with a Steward with the goal of becoming a steward.

Training: Volunteers are required to attend the Volunteer Orientation and will receive hands-on training from a Mentor Steward for one to three years.

Workday Volunteer

Position Description

Purpose of Volunteer Service: To assist the site Steward with efforts to restore and protect native ecosystems.

Supervisors: Site Steward, Restoration Ecologist, Volunteer Coordinator

Typical Assignment: To cut brush, build burn piles, pull herbaceous weeds, harvest seed and perform other tasks during restoration workdays.

Seed Harvest Volunteer

Position Description: Purpose of Volunteer Service: To assist the restoration staff in collection of native plant seeds, which will be used to reestablish native plant communities in the woodland.

Supervisors: Restoration Ecologist, Volunteer Coordinator

Typical Assignment: Use hand tools to harvest woodland, prairie or wetland seeds at preserves throughout the county.

Adopt-A-Trail Volunteer

Position Description

Purpose of Volunteer Service: To help maintain the aesthetic and natural quality of the Nell's Woodland, **Supervisors:** Volunteer Coordinator

Typical Assignment: Community groups, organizations and individuals may adopt a section of the trail systems to promote trail usage by reporting on the conditions of the trail and collecting refuse from the trail area.

VOLUNTEER APPLICATION

Name: _____

(Last) (First) (M.I.)

Address: _____

(Street) (City) (Zip code)

Day phone: _____ Evening phone: _____

Cell phone (optional): _____ E-mail address: _____

*License plate #: _____ *Make/model/year vehicle: _____

Occupation: _____

Volunteer position applying for (check any/all of interest):

Days available (check all that apply):

Mon. Tues. Wed. Thurs. Fri. Sat. Sun.

Times available (A.M. or P.M.): _____

Education

Nature Center Host/Hostess

Nature Program Volunteer

Special Events Volunteer

Natural Area Management

Apprentice Steward/Steward

Seed Harvest Volunteer

Preserve Monitor

(Bird, Butterfly, Dragonfly, Frog or Plants)

Workday Volunteer

Adopt-A-Trail

Cultural Preservation

History of Ottawa and the site

Are there factors that could affect your availability?

How did you hear about us? Nell's website Flyer Friend Local newspaper Web search Other:

Please list areas of interest, experience, hobbies, talents, skills or any other information you feel may be applicable to a volunteer position with Nell's Woodland?

What do you hope to gain from your volunteer experience with Nell's Woodland?

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Please sign, date and return application to:

Nell's Woodland

2000 Alexis Ave.

Ottawa, Illinois 61350

VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT AND MEDICAL RELEASE FORM

Volunteer Name: _____

Home Address: _____

Street City/State Zip

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

Volunteer Disclosure (optional):

Please list any pre-existing conditions, allergies or medications that medical personnel should be aware of, in case of an emergency:

IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY, PLEASE NOTIFY:

(For minor volunteer, please list parent or guardian first)

Name: _____ Relationship: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Relationship: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Relationship: _____ Phone: _____

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING CAREFULLY BEFORE SIGNING:

In agreeing to serve as a Nell's Woodland volunteer, I understand and agree to the following:

1. I agree to operate within the scope of the duties associated with my volunteer position, whether performing those duties on or off Nell's property (as in the case of special events). I have received the required orientation from my Nell's staff contact and/or the Nell's Volunteer Coordinator, and I understand what my volunteer duties entail. I understand that, in accepting the position as a Nell's Woodland Volunteer, I am agreeing to follow all rules, regulations, guidelines and policies presented during orientation.
2. I understand that I am not and will not be considered an employee of Nell's Woodland, nor will my involvement lead to employment, nor will I receive compensation for my services. I understand that I am at all times to follow the supervision and direction of the Nell's staff members in the commission of any volunteer activity. I also understand that I do not supervise other Nell's volunteers unless specifically authorized to do so by Nell's staff.
3. I understand that my volunteer relationship with Nell's Woodland can be terminated at any time by either party. I understand that failure to abide by any of the rules, regulations and/or guidelines presented here or in any other form through Nell's may result in disciplinary action and/or my

dismissal as a Nell's Woodland volunteer. If my volunteer relationship is suspended or terminated, I will promptly return all Nell's supplies, equipment, records and other items in good, clean condition.

4. I understand that I am a representative of Nell's Woodland, and will conduct myself in a manner so as to present a positive image of Nell's to those who visit the facilities and preserve areas. This includes being courteous and helpful to visitors, and following guidelines for appropriate dress. I understand that I am not authorized to enforce the rules and regulations of Nell's Woodland. I further understand that I am not to give interviews, submit press releases, or otherwise interact with the media without prior approval from Nell's.
5. I understand that there are certain risks for injury in any outdoor program or activity, and that the staff and volunteers of Nell's Woodland will make every reasonable effort to ensure the safety and health of each volunteer or participant. Beyond this, I will not hold Nell's Woodland or its staff responsible, and I agree to assume full risk for any injury.
6. I hereby give Nell's Woodland consent to, and shall hold Nell's and staff harmless for, obtaining and/or administering emergency treatment to me in the event that I am unable to obtain prompt emergency medical attention on my own behalf as a result of illness, accident, or allergic reaction. I understand that I am responsible for reporting any accidents to the Volunteer Coordinator within 24 hours of the incident.

VOLUNTEER: _____ DATE: _____

NELL'S WOODLAND STAFF: _____ DATE: _____

IF THE VOLUNTEER IS UNDER THE AGE OF 18, A PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN MUST READ AND SIGN BELOW

"By my signature I certify that I am the parent or legal guardian of this minor volunteer. I further certify that I have read, understood and consent to all stipulations of the above disclaimer and volunteer agreement, and hereby give my permission for the minor applicant to serve as a volunteer for Nell's Woodland."

PARENT/GUARDIAN: _____

PRINT NAME: _____ DATE: _____

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Criminal History Background Check

& Driver's License Authorization Form

Nell's Woodland requires criminal background checks of all full-time and part-time employees, seasonals, interns and volunteers (over age 18). Nell's also requires drivers' license checks for those classifications utilizing Nell's vehicles and equipment. These measures are being instituted in an attempt to ensure the safety of participants, employees and volunteers.

VOLUNTEER INFORMATION

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

Last Name:

First Name:

Middle Initial:

Date of Birth: / /

Month / Day / Year

I certify that the information provided above is true and complete. I understand that false or misleading information given in my volunteer application, interview(s) or on this form will render my application void and will result in termination in the event of my volunteer assignment. I authorize The Nell's Foundation to make a criminal background investigation in arriving at a decision regarding my volunteer service. I further authorize the Illinois State Police to release criminal background information as part of the criminal background and the Secretary of State to release driving records as part of the driver's license check to The Nell's Foundation.

Signature: _____

Date: _____ Timing