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### **Annotated Bibliography – Senior Capstone, Great Parks of Hamilton County**

Being out in the great outdoors is a passion of mine. For as long as I can remember, I've always been the kid that enjoys being outside. Whether it's to go for a run, or play a sport, I couldn't get enough of the great outdoors! For my 15-hour community service partner, I picked The Great Parks of Hamilton County. When we were tasked with finding an organization to work with this semester, I wanted to challenge myself with something I've never tried before. I've done lots of work for organizations like Matthew 25, and various soup kitchens but nothing like helping out the local park system. I wanted to help keep the parks clean and learn how to volunteer by being outdoors and physical. In this assignment, I'm going to be researching more into my style of organization to learn various components on how they operate. This assignment will help me with later projects in the semester.

#### **Source One: Evaluating The Impact Of Volunteers Serving Public Lands**

##### **Citation:**

Lin, Jeremy, and Alison A. Ormsby. "Evaluating the Impact of Volunteers Serving Public Lands." *Parks (Northwood, London, England)*, vol. 27, no. 1, 2021, pp. 25–34., <https://doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.CH.2021.PARKS-27-1JL.en>. Accessed 2 Mar. 2023.

**Relevance:** Public Parks, Volunteering, Impact of Volunteers, Why Volunteers are important

**Summary:** The first article I found titled, “Evaluating The Impact of Volunteers Serving Public Lands,” discusses the impact that volunteers have on public lands, like parks. It goes over how vital volunteers are to the success of public lands. “A pattern of budgetary deficits within the public sector has increased reliance on volunteers to advocate for and protect publicly managed natural and cultural resources,” (Lin and Ormsby, 2021, p. 25). The growth of demand for public parks and lack of funding have created a huge, important need for volunteers at a park. Not only are volunteers necessary to help carry out functions at the park, but they are now being relied on to help protect natural resources as well. The article also goes on to state how volunteers have a profound and measurable impact of the healthy function of parks. The article not only broke down the importance of volunteer work at public parks, but also the coordination on how that work is done. “Although volunteer work is an important component of the park system, volunteer coordination is often a peripheral responsibility, and commonly listed as 25 per cent of total work time,” (Lin and Ormsby, 2021, p. 26). This article really helps me understand the importance of volunteers to public parks.

### **Source Two: Greenspace Volunteering Post-Disaster**

#### **Citation:**

Miller, Shaleen. “Greenspace Volunteering Post-Disaster: Exploration of Themes in Motivation, Barriers, and Benefits from Post-Hurricane Park and Garden Volunteers.” *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management*, vol. 63, no. 11, 2020, pp. 2004–2021., <https://doi.org/10.1080/09640568.2019.1700942>. Accessed 2 Mar. 2023.

**Relevance:** Park volunteering importance, Volunteers for natural disaster, Benefits of volunteering, mental health

**Summary:** This article I found discusses the importance of volunteers on greenspaces, like parks, after disasters happen. “Volunteers are an important resource for green infrastructure, both providing important maintenance, as well as providing education and connection that promotes conservation and ecological work,” (Miller, 2019). The article goes on to describe efforts by volunteers after natural disasters and, how these efforts create a longer lasting impact on the volunteers. This type of volunteering creates community resilience. The article also went into how volunteering has benefits on overall mental health. “The benefits of volunteering include decreased mortality and increased mental and physical health across socio-economic strata,” (Miller, 2019). This proves that not only is volunteer work good for the parks and communities, but it is also good for the volunteers overall mental health.

### **Source Three: Economics of the US National Park System**

#### **Citation:**

Walls, Margaret. “Economics of the US National Park System: Values, Funding, and Resource Management Challenges.” *Annual Review of Resource Economics*, vol. 14, no. 1, 2022, pp. 579–596., <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-resource-111920-021401>. Accessed 2 Mar. 2023.

#### **Relevance: U.S. Park, Funding of parks**

**Summary:** With my third article, I decided to switch my search up a bit and focus on the economic side of public parks across the United States (US). The article gives history about the US public park system. “The NPS (National Park System) is funded out of general fund revenues through the annual congressional appropriations process,” (Walls, 2022). The National Park

System gets most of its funding from the US Government. The government pays the park system to give compensation to workers and allow money for other various projects such as building shelters, bathrooms, or bridges. The article also goes on to talk about how the budget for the National Park System has remained relatively flat since 1980. Meaning, that the parks are starting to become underfunded. This again stresses the importance on the need for volunteers. The parks need volunteers to help with everyday operations. The article also explains on how our park system uses membership and charges admission to collect money to help fund the various needs of the park.

#### **Source Four: Great Parks Forever**

##### **Citation:**

The Team at Great Parks Ham. Co. “Naturally Invested.” *Gpforever*, Great Parks of Hamilton Co., 14 Nov. 2022, <https://greatparksforever.org/>.

**Relevance:** Great Parks of Hamilton Co., Importance of volunteering, Investing in parks, Information on my organization

**Summary:** For my next source, I decided to switch things up again and go to the website of my organization, Great Parks of Hamilton Co. This part of the site is titled, “Great Parks Forever”. This site discusses the importance of volunteer work and donations to the Hamilton County Park system. “To have Great Parks, we need great people. It takes you—generous, inspired “outsiders”—to transform our shared vision into reality,” (Great Parks Forever, 2023). The time and money that people donate to the park system in our city is vital to its success. The Great

Parks of Hamilton Co. organization has been around since the 1930's and has always done a great job maintaining our parks in the area. The park system manages over 17,700 acres in the Cincinnati area. The park system is constantly working to improve all of their locations across Cincinnati and with this, they require a lot of help from volunteers like me! From Activities such as picking up garbage, to building bridges, there are LOTS of ways to get involved in our city!

### Source Five: Volunteering In National Parks

#### Citation:

Watson, Rebecca. "Volunteering in National Parks." *National Park Foundation*, US National Park System, 2 Feb. 2023, <https://www.nationalparks.org/connect/blog/volunteering-national-parks#:~:text=Maintaining%20Trails&text=Trail%20maintenance%20volunteers%20help%20improve,for%20groups%20looking%20to%20volunteer.>

**Relevance:** Volunteering in US parks, Importance of volunteers, What volunteers do in parks

**Summary:** For my fifth and final source, I found an article on the US Park's website that again discusses the importance of volunteering at parks. Across the US, there is over 85 million acres of park lands to protect and keep clean! "As a volunteer, you can work behind the scenes on maintenance projects or as a park ambassador greeting and guiding visitors," (Watson, 2023).

The article goes on to talk about the many ways the volunteers can help at parks! Volunteers are even allowed to guide and help guests in US National Parks. Other volunteer activities include, planting trees, being a host at a campsite, maintaining trails, and more! "Trail maintenance volunteers help improve safety and prevent long-term deterioration on park trails by performing various tasks, from the collection of debris to cutting away brush to clear the pathways,"

(Watson, 2023). With all the parks across the US, the article stresses the vital importance of trail maintenance. There aren't enough park employees to ensure the safety of the trails. Volunteers that are willing to help with trails ensure safety to those enjoying our beautiful parks.

The five sources I found have really helped me better understand our park systems and how they operate. In addition, these sources also helped me understand the importance of my volunteer work at the parks. The parks need volunteers like me to help keep things clean and operational. Parks don't receive nearly the amount of funding they need, so it's vital for them to have volunteers to lend a hand and help complete tasks that are needed. On top of that, it was found that people who DO volunteer at parks have higher overall mental health and higher overall happiness. I am so happy I picked the parks to complete my service hours and I look forward to researching the parks more!

## Works Cited:

- Lin, Jeremy, and Alison A. Ormsby. "Evaluating the Impact of Volunteers Serving Public Lands." *Parks (Northwood, London, England)*, vol. 27, no. 1, 2021, pp. 25–34., <https://doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.CH.2021.PARKS-27-1JL.en>. Accessed 2 Mar. 2023.
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