



Parks & Trails Earth Day

April 23, 2022



Friends Group Toolkit

An internal planning document for friends groups

This statewide volunteer event will be coordinated by Parks & Trails Council (P&TC) along with its friends group partners in collaboration with Minnesota DNR.





Overview: Schedule & Timeline

Event Overview

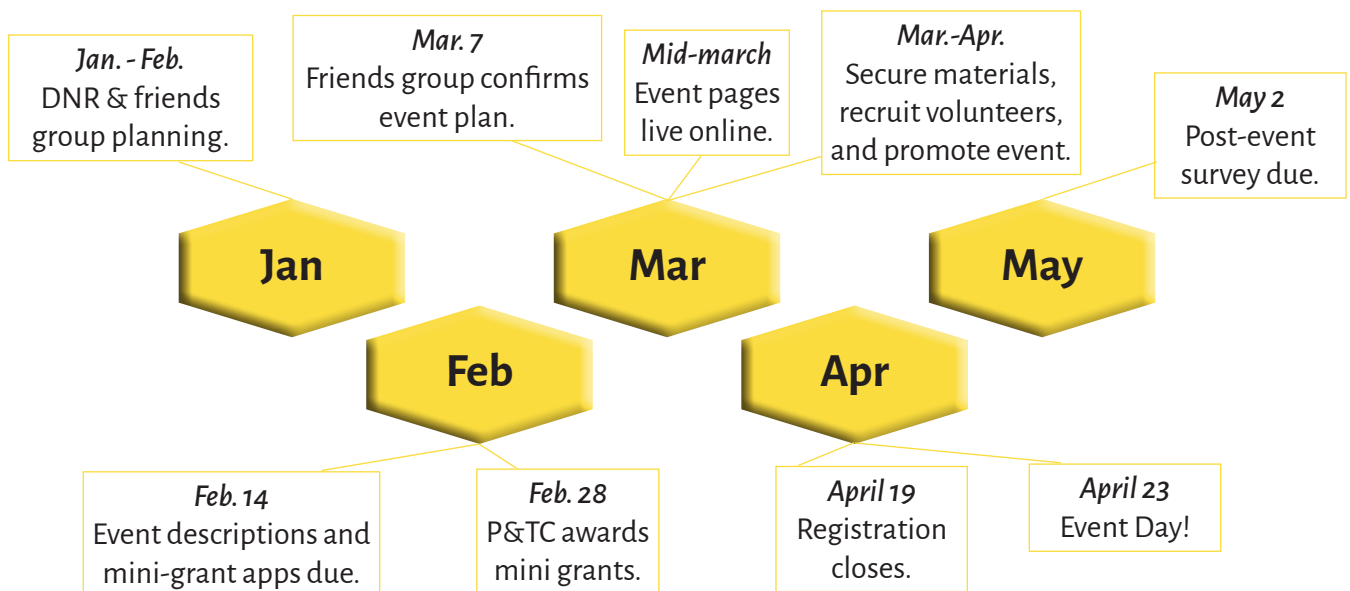
Earth Day is celebrated as a day to volunteer and give back to the planet. What better way to celebrate than to volunteer for parks and trails in Minnesota! The DNR celebrates Earth Day on April 23 by offering free entrance to all of their state parks. On this day, we envision a statewide volunteer day where Minnesotans can find a nearby park or trail and give back by helping to clean up and prepare for the upcoming summer season. We invite friends groups to sponsor and coordinate an event at their park or trail, partnering with Parks & Trails Council and the DNR. **Your group will use this toolkit to plan the event.** If your group partners with a local land management agency, contact them directly to share this opportunity.

Schedule

Each stewardship event will follow the same schedule as shown in the table. The public portion of the event is from 9am-12pm. Set up and clean up before and after the event will be led by friends group volunteers.

| Time | Activity | Responsible Party |
|-------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| 8:00am - 9:00am | Set Up | Friends Group |
| 9:00am - 9:15am | Check In | Friends Group |
| 9:15am - 9:30am | Welcome / Safety Talk | DNR |
| 9:30am - 11:45am | Volunteer Activities | Friends Group & DNR |
| 11:45am - 12:00pm | Closing Talk / Thank You | Friends Group & DNR |
| 12:00pm - 1:00pm | Clean Up | Friends Group |

Timeline





Step 1: Create Project Plan

(Submit plan to P&TC by Feb. 14.)

Please use this sheet to prepare your project plan in coordination with the DNR or agency. Once this plan is ready, **please submit the details to P&TC by Feb. 14, 2022, using the online form on our website: www.parksandtrails.org/friends-groups/earthday**. The information you share will be used to prepare online registration and promotional materials.

Project Details

Project type (*circle all that apply*): Trash pickup / Natural resource / Brush clearing / Tree planting / Other

Project description: _____

| Materials Needed (<i>description</i>) | Does DNR or FG already have this? | Cost (<i>if need to buy</i>) | Responsible Party |
|--|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| e.g. 25 trash bags | Yes / No | | |
| e.g. 20 pairs safety glasses | Yes / No | | |
| e.g. 50 masks | Yes / No | | |
| | Yes / No | | |
| | Yes / No | | |
| | Yes / No | | |

Apply for mini-grant? Yes / No (*P&TC is offering ten \$150 mini-grants to friends groups to support these events. You can apply for these funds when you submit your project plan details through the online form.*)

Location of work: _____

Check-in spot: _____

Volunteers

Volunteer activities (*circle all that apply*): Bending / Lifting / Shoveling / Raking / Trimming / Other

Maximum number of volunteers that can be supported: _____

Ages volunteer activities are appropriate for (*circle all that apply*): 11 and under / 12-17 / 18+

What accommodations could be made for a volunteer with a disability or mobility issue? (*e.g. specific activities or assisted transport to site*) _____



Step 2: Spread the Word

Outreach Methods

While P&TC and the DNR will be spreading the word about these events, we will need your help! You have an incredible network in your community, and you can make sure people know about this opportunity. We encourage you to utilize each of these outreach methods. P&TC will be providing templates or materials for each method, which will make it easier for you!

| Outreach Method | Ideas | Timing | Responsible Party |
|---------------------------|--|---|-------------------|
| Posters | Park or trail / libraries / local businesses / breweries | Post starting mid-March | |
| Friends group news-letter | | | |
| Social media | Friends page or group / chamber page / neighborhood groups | Starting mid-march & before registration closes | |
| Newspaper | | Early April | |
| Radio | | Before registration closes | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

Partnership

Another way to recruit volunteers is by finding a partner that can work with their constituency to bring people they engage with to the event. When doing this, it's important to consider if this event would help them meet their goals, what resources they might need to partner, and what benefit this event would bring to them. See below for some examples.

- Youth Group: e.g. Boys & Girls Club, YMCA, Scouts, National Honor Society, 4-H, etc.
- Business: e.g. corporate group, brewery, businesses with a volunteer program, etc.
- Church Group: _____
- Service Organization: e.g. Big Brother Big Sister, Rotary, Lions, etc.



Step 3: Event Day

Hosting the Event

You've created a plan, and you've spread the word. Now you need to be ready for the big day! Ensure you secure all the materials laid out in your plan and use the following checklists to navigate event day. It will be helpful to assign a person to take care of each section.

COVID-19 Pandemic Precautions

Volunteers will need to follow any DNR COVID precaution requirements for visitors. While we don't know what the future has in store, it is likely that some COVID-19 pandemic precautions will be necessary. We will share more details as the date nears, but plan to have hand sanitizer and masks on hand.

Main Contacts

| | Name | Phone | Email |
|-----------------------|------|-------|-------|
| DNR/Agency Contact | | | |
| Friends Group Contact | | | |

Registration Station Materials

- Registration list
- Pens, markers
- Hand sanitizer, masks
- Name tags
- Extra day-of volunteer forms
- Friends group brochures/info
- First aid kit
- _____

Photography Shot List (9:00am-12:00pm)

- Photographer: _____
- "Before" shots of work areas
- Group welcome
- Action shots of volunteers
- Group photos with accomplishments
- Group closing (if missed welcome)
- "After" shots of work areas



Checklists: Event Day

Setting Up (8:00am-9:00am)

- Person(s) in charge: _____
- Registration station: Items on previous checklist
- Signage: e.g. parking, arrows, welcome, etc.
- Tools and supplies: e.g. safety glasses, loppers, etc.
- Work area prep: e.g. flagging areas, id-ing species, etc.

Checking People In (8:45am-9:15am)

- Person(s) in charge: _____
- Welcome people to the park/trail.
- Ask for their name(s). Find on registration list.
- Share hand sanitizer, masks, etc.
- Have them fill out a name tag.

Welcome & Safety Talk (9:15am-9:30am)

- Person(s) in charge: _____
- Welcome & thank you! Perhaps lead an icebreaker?
- Brief park/trail overview: Park history. Share where closest bathroom is too.
- Volunteer activities: What are we doing today? Who's leading?
- Safety talk/training: COVID protocols. How are we staying safe? What are the risks?

Optional language for welcome: Thank you so much for joining us to volunteer today at [park/trail]. We are here today participating in a statewide stewardship event celebrating Earth Day. Across Minnesota, there are [#] sites engaging in hands-on volunteer activities, just like you will be today. This event was coordinated by Parks & Trails Council of Minnesota, the Minnesota DNR, and friends groups, including [your friends group]. Our friends group's mission is [your mission].



Checklists: Event Day

Activities (9:30am-11:45am)

| Activity | Person(s) leading | Location | # of volunteers |
|---|---------------------------------------|--|-----------------|
| e.g. clearing brush from hiking trail with hand tools | e.g. 1 friends member + DNR check-ins | e.g. Highland trail starting by picnic shelter | e.g. 5-10 |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

Closing Talk (11:45am-12:00pm)

- Person(s) in charge: _____
- Thank you! Describe impact of their work.
- Next step: Invite them to learn more about or join the friends group. Share any upcoming friends group events or volunteer opportunities.
- Enjoy the day: Let them know about any naturalist programs happening today. Share cool spots to visit in the park or trail.

Cleaning Up (12:00pm-1:00pm)

- Person(s) in charge: _____
- Collecting all tools, signs, materials, etc.



Step 4: Post-Event Tasks

Sharing the Story

The event was a success! Now, there are a few followup items to do.

- Fill out P&TC's event report and debrief form by May 2 at www.parksandtrails.org/earth/friends.
 - Share pictures and descriptions on social media, in your newsletter, and other places.
 - Celebrate and say thank you to your volunteers. (You will get an email list from P&TC.)
-

Please share any questions or concerns you have with Ashley Petel, P&TC Friends Group Program Manager at 651-370-7907 or apetel@parksandtrails.org.

