



Volunteer Services Program

FY24 Annual Report



Raleigh
Parks

Table of Contents

Thank You 4

Raleigh Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department’s Mission and Vision4

Why Do We Connect Our Community Through Volunteerism?.....4

Volunteer Services Program FY 24 Accomplishments..... 5

Overall Volunteer Impacts to the Department 6

The “Big Three” Metrics6

Volunteer Experience Survey Data6

Why Does Our Community Volunteer with Raleigh Parks? 7

Top Three Favorite Aspects of Volunteering with Raleigh Parks.....7

Top Three Least Favorite Aspects of Volunteering with Raleigh Parks7

Where Are Volunteers Serving?..... 8

Park Maintenance District Location Key8

All Volunteer Involvement Located By Park Maintenance District8

Total Number of Volunteers by Division in Each Park Maintenance District9

Hours Served by Raleigh Parks Division in Each Park Maintenance District9

Volunteer Impact By Division..... 10

Parks and Natural Resources Division 10

 Overall Metrics 10

 Division Volunteer Opportunities.....10

Recreation Division 11

 Overall Metrics 11

 Division Volunteer Opportunities.....11

Resources Division 12

 Overall Metrics 12

 Division Volunteer Opportunities.....12

Business Process Management Division..... 13

 Overall Metrics 13

 Division Volunteer Opportunities.....13

Volunteer Services Program Summer Youth Initiatives 14

Teen Camps 14

Conservation Corps North Carolina (CCNC) Dix Park Youth Conservation Corps 15

2024 Fred Fletcher Outstanding Volunteer Awards 16

Donations 17

Donor/Memorial Bench Program 17

General Park Enhancement Fund 17

Largescale Project Highlight 17

 Project EverGreen 17

Thank You

Volunteers and donors are crucial to the Raleigh Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department's mission and we could not have had such a wonderful year without your dedication to our parks and greenways. We want to share our sincere thanks from everyone here at Raleigh Parks. Whether you donated time, talents, resources, or all three, you directly impacted the community.

This annual report is one way to show the impact the Volunteer Services Program and our volunteers have across Raleigh.

Raleigh Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department's Mission and Vision

Raleigh Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department's mission is, "Together we connect and enrich our community through exceptional experiences." Our vision statement is, "Bringing people to parks and parks to people."

By partnering with volunteers, Raleigh Parks expands its resources, develops positive community relationships, and provides a great place for our community to live and play.

Why Do We Connect Our Community Through Volunteerism?

Connecting the community to volunteer opportunities provides a gateway to forming meaningful partnerships with those Raleigh Parks serves. Volunteers directly enhance their communities through providing exceptional experiences such as coaching youth athletic leagues, instructing recreational classes, supporting events, and even supporting the environmental health of Raleigh through our park enhancement and stewardship opportunities.

These meaningful experiences for the volunteer, program participants, staff, and our department cultivate a culture of connectedness to one's community. Each experience has the ability to build investment in our parks and trails while carrying physical and mental health benefits for all involved.

Volunteers are more than a resource to Raleigh Parks. They are directly connected to the accomplishment of the mission and the experiences of the community at large.

Volunteer Services Program FY 24 Accomplishments

This year marked another exceptional year of volunteerism with the Raleigh Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department. The Volunteer Services Program saw growth from our community donating their time, talents and resources. This year we celebrated some great successes in partnership with our volunteers and colleagues. Here are a few key highlights:

- **Volunteer Participation:** Just over 12,500 volunteers assisted with park enhancement projects, youth athletic leagues, events, and much more. This brings us closer to our pre-COVID-19 average of 13,000 volunteers a year. The program has seen continued recovery post-COVID. Volunteers served approximately 64,000 hours, which is being valued at over \$2 million based on the Independent Sectors Value of Volunteer Service.
- **CERVIS Volunteer Management Software:** The Volunteer Services Program (VSP) has been utilizing CERVIS for 12 years but previously just for recruitment. Over the last two years the VSP team worked to transition the entire department into utilizing CERVIS for not only recruitment, but also for logging impact and as a singular, department-wide database. This transition has allowed us to collect some interesting impact data this year. For example, we had over 400 litter clean ups reported to us for a total of roughly 48,000 lbs. of litter! **Volunteers, be sure to report your impact so we can continue to tell your story!**
- **Website Updates:** The expanded utilization of the CERVIS software has also allowed us to make numerous improvements to our website such as embedding our CERVIS postings directly into it. The number of opportunities can be overwhelming to manage or sift through, but there are now icons to show the required participant age and filter options at the top to sort through the opportunities. There is even a calendar view to show what is available on a specific date.
- **Summer Youth Programs:** The Volunteer Services Program continued their partnership with Conservation Corps NC for the Dix Park Youth Conservation Corps. This partnership provides career and educational experience in the field of conservation to local teens. The Volunteer Services Program also partnered with two Raleigh Parks summer camps (Teen Corps Camp and Teens Behind the Scenes with Parks and Facilities). These camps offered opportunities for teens to get service hours for school as well as provided an introduction to possible careers related to park maintenance and natural resources. Learn more on page 14.
- **Volunteer Agreement Update:** This year, the Volunteer Services Program created a brand-new volunteer agreement that will be used moving forward. This new agreement allows staff to customize everything from job duties to the frequency of volunteering, in order to correctly represent each specific opportunity or partnership. This updated agreement has removed outdated verbiage that no longer applied to the majority of our opportunities and partners. We will start transitioning current agreements to this new one as they come up for renewal. We are excited to better represent our partnerships moving forward.

Overall Volunteer Impacts to the Department

The “Big Three” Metrics

The “Big Three” metrics are the standards by which most volunteer programs showcase the total impact their volunteers make. The “Big Three” metrics help quantify data but do not always reflect hard-to-quantify impacts such as the sense of community volunteers often build.

- 12,598* **Volunteers**
- 64,049 **Hours Served**
- \$2,004,744.70 **Value of Service**

* This number does not distinguish between individual volunteers and those who volunteered multiple times.

Volunteer Experience Survey Data

This data was collected through a survey that is emailed to all volunteers that attend one of our volunteer opportunities.

- 199 **Responses**
- 4.75 out of 5 **Exceptional Experience Rating**
- 97% of respondents **Would Volunteer Again**
- 53% of respondents were **First Time Volunteers**
- 46% of respondents **Found a New Park/Trail**

“Our oldest son and I volunteered for The Great MLK Day Family Stiltgrass Pull at the Walnut Creek Wetland Park. Everything about our volunteer experience **was exceptional!** From online registration, to pre-event communication, to the event itself, everything was so well organized. Our event manager, Celia, was outstanding! She was so enthusiastic, friendly, and positive, which made the experience wonderful. She educated us on the history of Walnut Creek Wetland Park, about the Japanese Stiltgrass, and the overall project.”

- *Volunteer testimonial submitted via the survey*

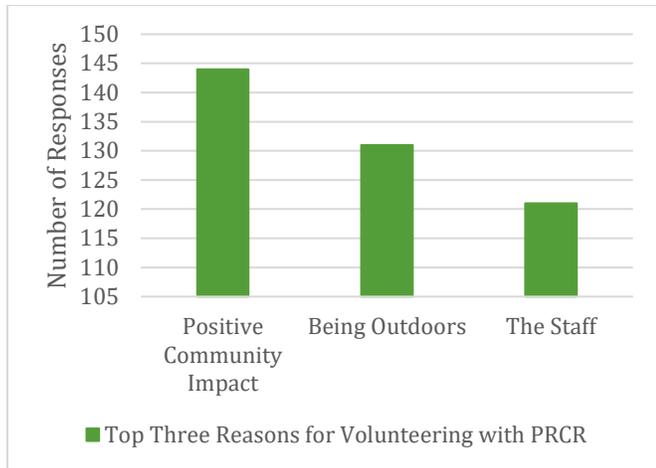


Figure 1: Volunteers in the City Greenhouse

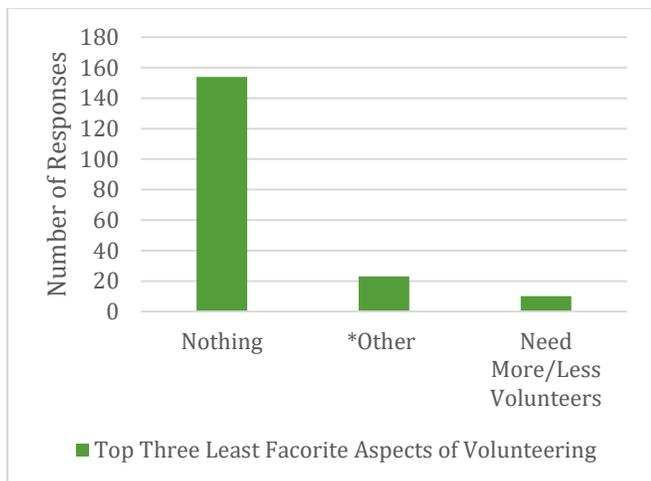
Why Does Our Community Volunteer with Raleigh Parks?

The following data is based off of the 199 responses to our Volunteer Experience Survey for fiscal year 2024. Those taking the survey could select multiple answers for these questions.

Top Three Favorite Aspects of Volunteering with Raleigh Parks



Top Three Least Favorite Aspects of Volunteering with Raleigh Parks



“Other” included responses such as weather, work intensity, and job or task the volunteer was assigned.



Figure 2: Volunteers at the Barwell Road Community Garden build event

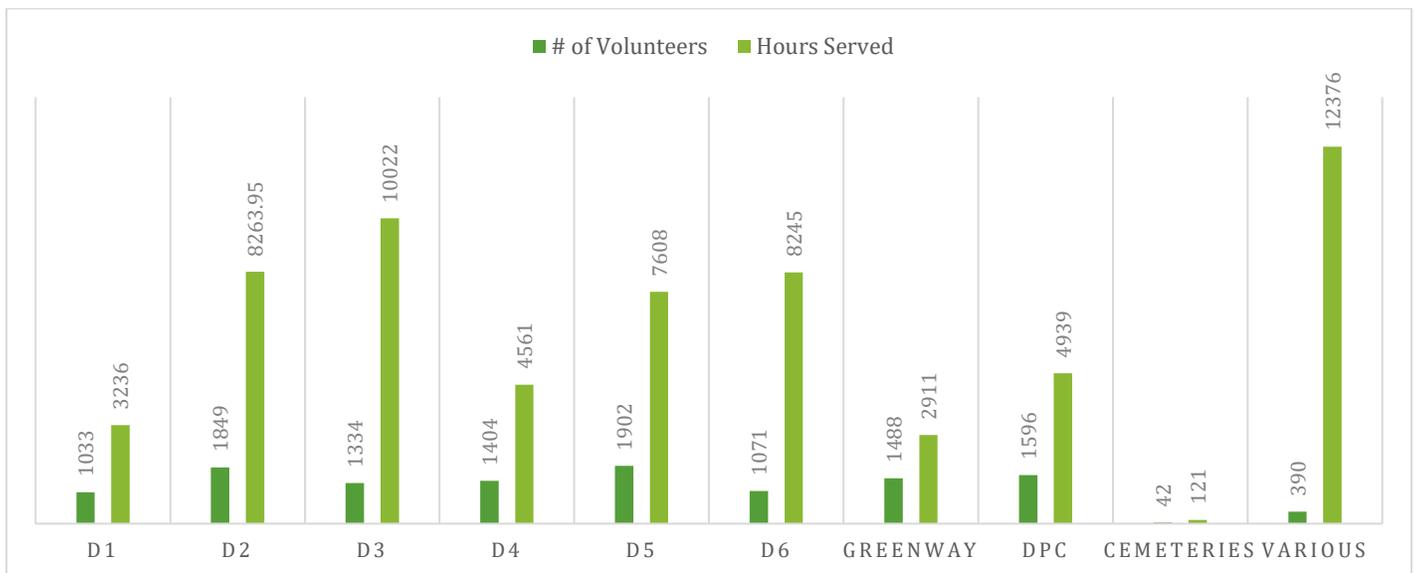
Where Are Volunteers Serving?

Park Maintenance District Location Key

The following charts show different datasets and assign them to a park maintenance district as a location identifier to help show where our volunteers serve across Raleigh. We utilize these districts to categorize location because they include un-staffed parks and trails as well as our staffed centers. Below is a key of where these districts are.

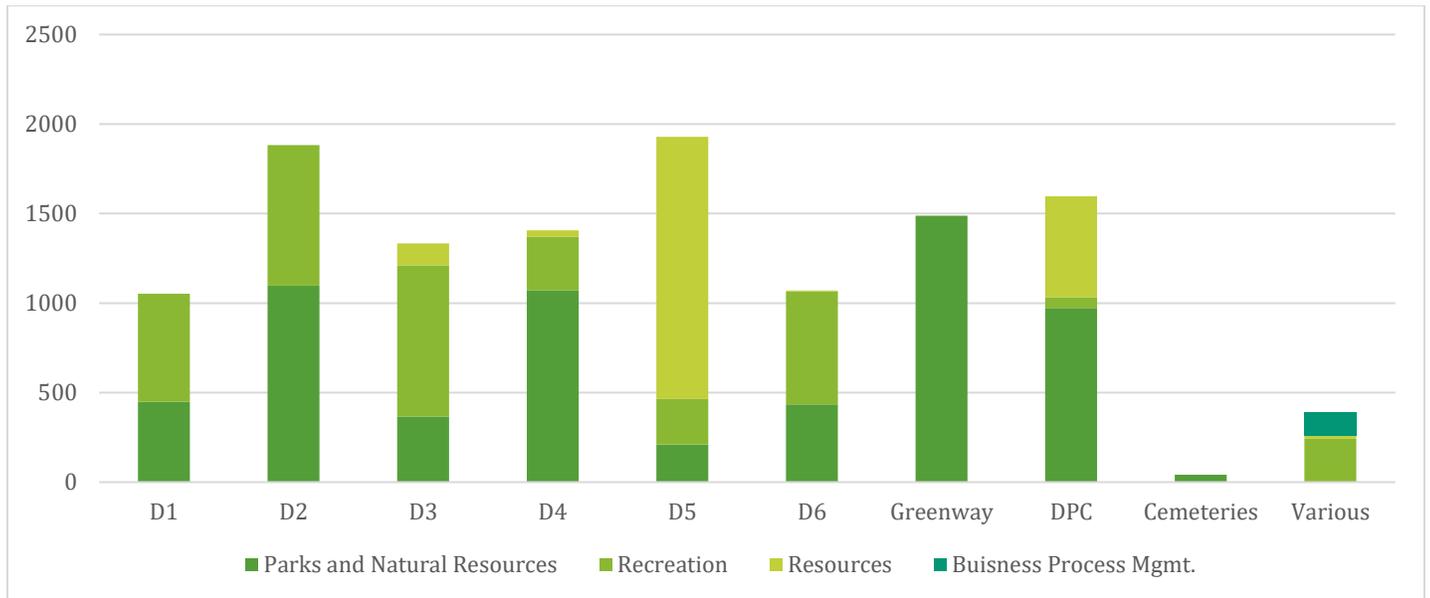
- **District 1** - Southwest Raleigh
- **District 2** - Southeast Raleigh
- **District 3** - North Raleigh
- **District 4** - Central to Northwest Raleigh
- **District 5** - Downtown Raleigh
- **District 6** - Northeast Raleigh
- **Destination Parks (DPC)** - John Chavis Park, Pullen Park, Dorothea Dix Park, and the Rose Garden
- **Cemeteries** - City Cemetery, Mt. Hope Cemetery, and O'Rorke Catholic Cemetery
- **Greenway** - All 120 miles of greenway trails maintained by the City of Raleigh
- **Various** - These are programs such as City-wide athletic leagues that are tracked as a whole instead of at a specific location.

All Volunteer Involvement Located By Park Maintenance District



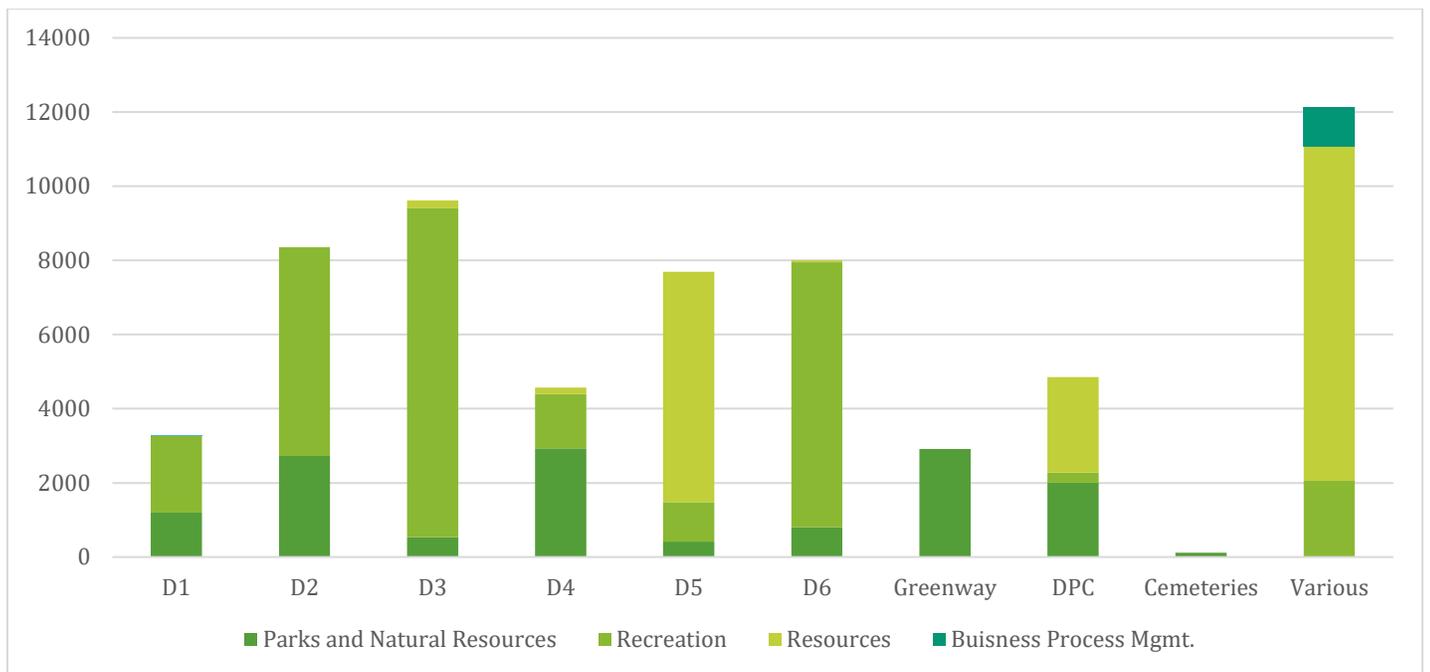
This chart shows the total number of volunteers and hours served in each park maintenance district. This data includes volunteer opportunities from each division within Raleigh Parks.

Total Number of Volunteers by Division in Each Park Maintenance District



This chart shows the number of volunteers serving across Raleigh and which division and district of Raleigh Parks they served.

Hours Served by Raleigh Parks Division in Each Park Maintenance District



This chart shows the hours volunteers served across Raleigh and in what division and district they served.

Volunteer Impact By Division

Parks and Natural Resources Division

Overall Metrics

This data reflects the efforts of volunteers serving in our Parks and Natural Resources Division. These volunteers help with everything from single-time park enhancement projects to our ongoing opportunities such as Adopt-A-Park/Trail, and Garden Programs.

- 6,385 **Volunteers**
- 15,324 **Hours of Service**
- \$479,641 **Value of Service**

Division Volunteer Opportunities

The data above reflects the efforts of volunteers serving in some of the following capacities:

- Adopt-A-Park Program
- Adopt-A-Trail Program
- Garden Programs
- Greenhouse opportunities
- Invasive plant removals
- NestWatch
- Scouting project awards
- Single-time park enhancement projects
- Single-time park stewardship projects

“The event was very well organized. Staff seemed to really care about the impact of the work and the volunteers’ experience.”

- *Volunteer testimonial submitted via the survey*

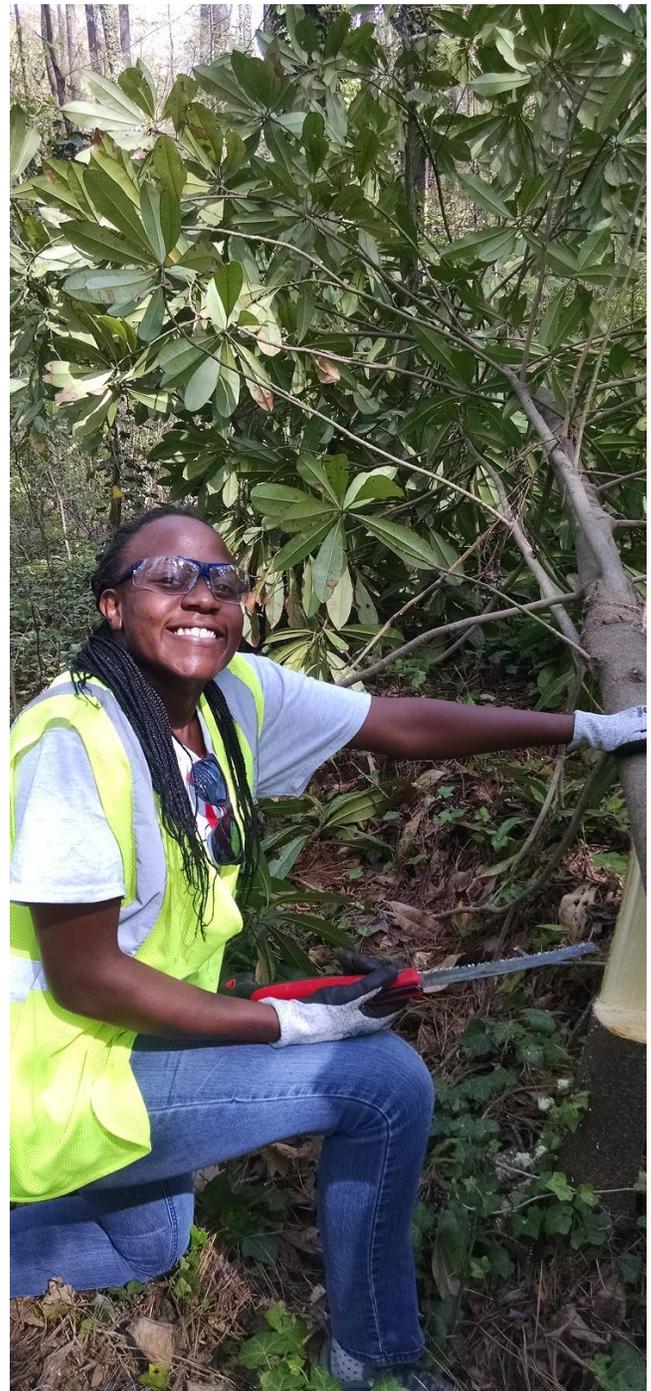


Figure 3: A volunteer removing invasive plants

Recreation Division

Overall Metrics

This data reflects the efforts of volunteers serving in our Recreation Division. These volunteers help with everything from athletic league coaching to events.

- 3,845 **Volunteers**
- 29,334 **Hours of Service**
- \$918,154 **Value of Service**

Division Volunteer Opportunities

The data above reflects the efforts of volunteers serving in some of the following capacities:

- Adult Program liasons
- Aquatic swim meets
- Athletic league coaches
- Community Center events
- English as a Second Language instructors
- Instructors/program assistants
- Specialized Recreation Program

“It was a special night! I really enjoyed the experience and appreciate the thought that goes into checking in with and supporting the volunteers.”

- *Volunteer testimonial submitted via the survey.*



Figure 4: A Youth Athletic League Coach and player

Resources Division

Overall Metrics

This data reflects the efforts of volunteers serving in our Resources Division. These volunteers participate in opportunities focused on our historic and cultural sites and arts programs as well as Dix Park events.

- 2,244 **Volunteers**
- 18,340 **Hours of Service**
- \$574,042 **Value of Service**

Division Volunteer Opportunities

The data above reflects the efforts of volunteers serving in some of the following capacities:

- Art programs
- Boards and Commissions
- City Museum Collections
- Docents
- Dorothea Dix Park events
- Events
- Friends of City of Raleigh Museum
- Holiday Express
- Instructors/program assistants

“It was amazing! Not only were the staff incredibly kind and easy to get along with, the activities that Pullen came up with for the children (at the arts fair) was genius. My friend and I had a lot of fun. I would do it again.”

- *Volunteer testimonial submitted via the survey.*



Figure 5: A Holiday Express volunteer leading the hot chocolate activity

Business Process Management Division

Overall Metrics

This data reflects the efforts of volunteers serving in our Business Process Management Division. These volunteers are part of our NC State Work Study Program

- **21 Volunteers**
- **1,059.5 Hours of Service**
- **\$33,162 Value of Service**

Division Volunteer Opportunities

The NCSU Work Study Program places students in various program areas across the department to gain career skills and work experience.

These undergraduate students engage in all divisions of the department focusing primarily on community building programs. Their involvement not only enhances their educational experience but also fosters a sense of connection and collaboration to the community.

NCSU funds their work and Raleigh Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department benefits from being able to expand our workforce and share real life job skills with local students.



Figure 6: Campers at the NCSU Belltower

Volunteer Services Program Summer Youth Initiatives

Teen Camps



Figure 7: Campers learning about athletic field maintenance from staff

This summer, the Volunteer Services Program partnered with the Recreation Division to coordinate learning and volunteering opportunities for two summer camps.

Teen Corps Camp is managed by the Raleigh Parks Teen Program and is a camp that coordinates opportunities for teens to acquire community service hours for school. This year one of their opportunities was to volunteer with Parks and Natural Resources to do everything from litter clean ups to volunteering in the greenhouse.

Teens Behind the Scenes with Parks and Facilities is a camp managed by the Ralph Campbell Community Center and is focused on providing hands-on experiences to learn about different careers in Park Maintenance and Natural Resources. The Volunteer Services team helped connect this camp to different experts in their field and coordinated some of the hands on learning opportunities.

We want to send a huge THANK YOU to our Recreation colleagues for letting us in on the fun!

Conservation Corps North Carolina (CCNC) Dix Park Youth Conservation Corps



Figure 8: A CCNC Dix Park Youth Conservation Corps member learning how to work with concrete

This summer marked the start of the fourth CCNC Dix Park Youth Conservation Corp. This crew of six teens and two young-adult crew leaders spent six weeks working on conservation and park maintenance projects at Dix Park.

Project Examples: This crew contributed **1,920 hours** of service to the department and completed a wide variety of projects such as building **6** swing pads, spreading **750 bails** worth of pine straw, removing **1,200 lbs.** of litter, pruning **53 trees**, removing invasive plant species in **6 acres** of land, maintaining **.25 miles** of trail, and installing **75 yards** of temporary fencing.

Education Sessions: This year, the crew learned about Political Science and Soil, Park Maintenance and Event Preparation, Federal and Local Government Career Journey, City of Raleigh Greenhouse Operations, Park Planning, The Dix Park Conservancy and a Park for All, Raleigh's Watershed, Invasive Plant Species, and Job Readiness.

Financial Support - Conservation Corps North Carolina, Dix Park Conservancy, Woodson Family Foundation, and North Carolina's Electric Cooperatives.

Programatic Support – City of Raleigh Cemetery Crew, Greenhouse Staff, Destination Parks Crew, Heavy Construction Crew, Invasive Program Crew, Marketing, Planning, Walnut Creek Wetland Park Staff, Dix Park Staff, Raleigh Stormwater, and the Dix Park Conservancy.

2024 Fred Fletcher Outstanding Volunteer Awards



The Fred Fletcher Outstanding Volunteer Awards are held each May to recognize volunteers for their hard work. Nominations are open to staff and the public and are voted on by the Parks Recreation and Greenway Advisory Board’s Fred Fletcher Volunteer Committee.

2024 Fred Fletcher Outstanding Volunteer Award Recipients

Award	Recipient
Harvey Karsevar Award	Kyle Bever
Outstanding Athletic Volunteer	Kira “Coach K” Hardy
Outstanding Financial Contributor	The John Wall Family Foundation
Outstanding Greenway Volunteer	The Great Raleigh Cleanup
Outstanding Adopt-A-Park Volunteer	Steve McDonald
Outstanding Adult Program Volunteer	Kathy Causby
Outstanding Specialized Recreation Program Volunteer	Sean Toomey
Outstanding Volunteer Group	Friends of Lake Johnson
Outstanding Project Volunteer	Accenture
Outstanding Park Volunteer	Kate Dixon
Outstanding Program Volunteer	Myra Bradley and Women That Care, Inc. David Lmartiniere
Outstanding Teen Volunteer	London Evans
Outstanding Cultural Resources Volunteer	Heaven Nemeth
Award of Excellence	Jermaine Johnson

Donations

The Volunteer Services Program manages two donation programs and assists with coordinating large-scale projects with community engagement aspects.

Donor/Memorial Bench Program

This program offers individuals or groups the opportunity to donate park benches in honor or memory of someone. They work with Park Maintenance staff to confirm the location.

- **21 Benches Donated**
- **\$14,700 Donated**

General Park Enhancement Fund

This General Park Enhancement Fund allows for donations to be made towards items for park enhancement projects such as landscape material, plants, and other items. All projects/donations must be approved and follow our Park Maintenance Standards and Master Plans.

- **7 Donations**
- **\$5,692.41 Total Value of all Donations**
- **\$2,787.57 Value of In-kind Donations**

Largescale Project Highlight

Project EverGreen

In the spring of 2024 City of Raleigh Parks partnered with Project EverGreen to redo landscaping at Sanderford Road Park. Project EverGreen coordinated donors and landscape professionals who volunteered their time, talents and resources towards the project.

- **Over 1,000 Plants Installed**
- **6 B&B Trees Planted**
- **\$30,000 Estimated Project Value**
- **\$20,000 Estimated Value of Volunteer Time**
- **Partners and Donors:** Project EverGreen, Ruppert Landscape, Professional Grounds Management Society, and NC State University



Figure 9: Project EverGreen volunteers planting at Sanderford Road