

Columbus and Franklin County Metro Parks – Park Ranger

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Background

During the summer of 2021, I worked for the Columbus and Franklin County Metro Parks as a seasonal park ranger. The park I was stationed at was Sharon Woods Metro Park. As a ranger at Sharon Woods, I also had the task of patrolling Inniswoods Metro Garden. Both parks are in Westerville, Ohio.

The Columbus and Franklin County Metro Parks

System is a public agency in Franklin County, Ohio and the surrounding counties that has over 20 Metro Parks that span over 28,000 acres of land with 230 miles of trails. The Metro Parks are free to enter and are open everyday!

The mission of the Metro Parks is to “conserve open spaces, while providing places and opportunities that encourage people to discover and experience nature.”

I attended a virtual career fair in the winter of 2021 that led to an interview with the Columbus and Franklin County Metro Parks. After two interviews and an extensive background check, I received an offer to work at Sharon Woods Metro Park. The process of applying, interviewing and being hired was easy to navigate.

Plants at Inniswood Metro Garden



Typical Duties of a Park Ranger

While no day is the same, there are some tasks that must be completed every day:

- Complete a daily ranger log
- Interact and assist visitors
- Help park stay clean and litter free
- Keep all staff informed of park activities through radio communication
- Respond to emergencies
- Enforce Metro Parks rules and regulations
- Open or close park

When you are on the job, the safety of visitors, coworkers and yourself are your top priority.

During every shift you are the face of the park! You are there to ensure that the mission of the Metro Parks is being carried out.

Helping a park visitor who got a little lost to find their owners.



The many vehicles of the Metro Parks

Park rangers spend 75% of their time in the ranger pickup. The pickup has all basic tools you will need during a shift, but there are times you may need a different vehicle for a specific task. Here are just a few of the many vehicles you might use as a park ranger:

Golf Cart

Used to patrol Inniswoods, since it is too small to patrol with a pickup.



F250

Used when you need to haul more than the regular patrol pickup can manage.



Ranger Pickup

The daily driver



The Gator

When you need to perform a rescue on trail, the gator is the best vehicle because of its size and speed.



Reflection

My experience with the Columbus and Franklin County Metro Parks was very rewarding. Thanks to the time I spent there I was able to learn about the duties of a park ranger. I especially enjoyed being able to interact with the many types of visitors who spend time in our parks.

While the park ranger position ultimately isn't the kind of position I will look for after graduation, I am glad that I was given this opportunity. During my internship I learned about the many and varied jobs in the natural resource management field. The team at Sharon Woods and Inniswoods went above and beyond to make me feel welcome.

For anyone looking to pursue an internship or career in the natural resource field I would highly recommend the Columbus and Franklin County Metro Parks. You can find job openings on their website and through the school of environmental and natural resources.

