

April Anderson

Skills and Qualifications

- Engaging National Association of Interpretation Certified Interpretive Guide (CIG)
- Research, development, and program delivery experience to support learning for all ages and needs
- Interpretive exhibit, marketing, and outreach material development experience
- Volunteer recruitment, training, retention, and supervisory experience

Experience & Key Contributions

*** National Museum of Transportation, Sustainable Horticulturalist/Outdoor Volunteer Coordinator St. Louis, MO, 2017**

- + Recruited and organized individual volunteers and outside groups to manage sustainable gardens on 42-acre campus.
- + Created a landscape budget for 2018 (since none had previously existed).
- + Established working relationships with Missourians for Monarchs, Federated Garden Clubs of Missouri, Ameren, The Home Depot, Students Today Leaders Forever, The Principia School, Parkway School District SPARK! Program, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, and Greenscapes Nursery.
- + Educated volunteers about invasive species, then led work days to remove invasives.
- + Designed and installed sustainable native gardens to improve site appearance and provide habitat for wildlife.

*** Extended Care Program Assistant Director and Substitute Teacher, The Principia School, St. Louis, MO, 2015 – present**

- + Research, promote, and implement recreational programming and learning opportunities after school and during breaks.
- + Train and supervise a staff of high school and college students to work with programs for preschool – 5th grade.
- + Serve as an on-call educator for preschool through high school.

*** Conscientious Gardener contributor, Missouri Gardener Magazine, St. Louis, MO, 2016 – present**

- + Work independently to write stories and capture images that educate readers about native plants and gardeners who are successfully using native plants to provide habitat for wildlife. In one issue, my article about native milkweeds was used as a cover story.

*** Open Spaces feature writer, Quintessential Barrington Magazine, Barrington, IL, 2005 – present**

- + Conduct primary and secondary research to share stories that educate readers about ways they can enjoy and improve the natural world. (continued on p. 2)

*** Land Preservation/Marketing Specialist, BACTrust, Barrington, IL, 2012 – 2015**

- + Monitored conservation easements and generated reports containing site photographs, ecological observations, and research-based recommendations to preserve natural areas.
- + Researched and composed educational materials for website, blog, and newsletters.

- + Wrote press releases and Constant Contacts.
- + Created marketing materials for fundraising and special events.
- + Organized and supervised volunteer work days to restore natural areas.
- + Applied for and received annual grants from The Nature Conservancy to purchase tools for restoration work.

*** Kids College Outdoor Education Specialist, Elgin Community College, Elgin, IL, 2000 – 2015**

- + Designed, promoted, and implemented new hands-on programs to reconnect children with nature through history, art, science, and survival programs. Programming for youth in grades 1 – 8 allowed children to build shelters using natural materials, harvest and cook wild edibles outdoors using a Dutch oven and portable stove, use natural materials to create art, and observe plants and animals in natural habitats around campus.

*** Naturalist, Hawthorne Hill Nature Center, Elgin, IL, 2000 – 2011**

- + Created exhibits, programs, and marketing for a new nature center including a life-sized accessible oak tree with information about local trees, cultivation, tree products, trees as habitat, and a series of interpretive signs to understand the history of this suburban nature center's natural areas, invasive species and restoration work, and items of seasonal interest.
- + Designed, promoted, and led innovative nature interpretation, hands-on education, and recreation programs for preschoolers, families, school groups, scouts, adults, and individuals.
- + Recruited, trained, and supervised volunteers in office, natural areas, garden, and exhibit construction, creating a site-specific volunteer handbook and application that inspired the development of a citywide volunteer program.
- + Supervised over a dozen Eagle Scouts to encourage the completion of new gardens, trails, native landscape restoration, a wheelchair-accessible bridge, a nature play area, and an outdoor campfire/program area.
- + Prioritized & implemented landscape restoration plans, supervising the development and care of the center's organic vegetable garden, woodland wildflower garden, wetland garden, and natural areas.
- + Developed collaborative programming with local natural history museum, historical society, and local library.
- + Managed the development and completion of interpretive exhibits and signs indoors and out enlisting the support of local donors.
- + Applied for and received annual grants from The Nature Conservancy.

*** Family Manager, Anderson Household, Elgin, IL, 2002 – 2014**

- + Managed family budget, recreation and supplemental educational programming, and childrearing for two boys. (continued on p. 3)
- + Cared for Mom (2007 – 2014) until she passed away, striving to keep her engaged physically, mentally, socially, and spiritually. Served as her legal guardian, monitoring finances, and taking responsibility for business decisions to support her long-term care.

*** Manager of Natural Resources & Interpretation, Crystal Lake Park District Nature Center, Crystal Lake, IL, 1997 – 2002**

- + Managed the development and completion of interpretive nature signage and exhibits, indoors & out for new nature center.
- + Designed, marketed, taught, and supervised innovative outdoor education/recreation programs for preschoolers, families, school groups, scouts, adults, and individuals.
- + Collaborated with the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission to prioritize and implement native landscape restoration plans in woodland, fen, and prairie ecosystems.
- + Developed collaborative programming with local library.
- + Supervised volunteers and visiting groups of volunteers.

*** Outdoor Program Center Director, Lone Tree Area Girl Scout Council, Oak Park, IL 1997 – 1995**

- + Directed year-round outdoor program center for Girl Scout council serving girls from troops based in the western suburbs for Chicago, scheduling, training, and supervising weekend volunteers and summer camp staff.
- + Collaborated with Illinois Department of Natural Resources to manage unique natural areas including hill prairie, wetlands, and woodlands devising and implementing management plans to improve habitat for wildlife and campers.

*** Naturalist, Oak Brook Terrace Nature Center, Oakbrook Terrace, IL 1993 – 1995**

- + Transformed an empty building into a community nature center, developing exhibits to interpret a small site nestled in the middle of an office park, collaborating with a neighboring REI store to offer expanded programs. Exhibits included a “How do you measure up?” wall to help families appreciate the prairie, “The Ever Changing Oak” an exhibit with overlays to highlight items of seasonal interest.

Education

- * Northern Illinois University. MS Ed in Curriculum & Instruction for Outdoor Teacher Education, Concentration in Interpretation (summa cum laude).
- * Michigan State University. MA in Advertising, Concentration in Recreation Marketing.
- * University of Cincinnati. BBA in Marketing and Management with Minor in Communications.

Certifications

National Association of Interpretation, Certified Interpretive Guide (CIG)
YMCA First Aid, CPR/AED, Oxygen Administration, Lifesaving

Presentations

- * Missouri Botanic Garden – Shaw Nature Preserve Native Plant School
- + Ethnobotany & Native Plant Folklore -- a presentation and hike designed to help adult learners appreciate the utility as well as legends attached to native plants (cont'd on p. 4)
- + Grapevine Wreath Making – a program to encourage the harvest and use of grapevines in areas where they are behaving aggressively.

* Region 5 (Heartland) and Region 6 (South Central) NAI Conferences
Crafting the perfect message – a presentation to designed to help interpretive professionals write better exhibit materials.

* Nature-based programs for American Camping Association Mid-States Conference
Offered numerous programs to camp administrators, program directors, and staff over the course of a decade ranging from nature interpretation to land management.

* Child's World Early Childhood Conference
Provided Continuing Professional Development (CPDUs) training several years for preschool educators and daycare providers wanting to provide safe, hands-on nature-based activities for their tiny constituents.

Volunteer Work & Recognition

- * 2015 – present Town & County Community Garden organic gardener – 2017 Applied for & received a Wild Ones grant to create a pollinator garden at the Community Garden
- * 2016 – present St. Louis Native Plant Tour volunteer guide
- * 2017 – present National Association of Interpretation (NAI) newsletter contributor
- * 2017 – present Special Events volunteer for Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site
- * 2017 NAI Nature Center Directors & Administrators' Road Show scholarship recipient and national conference volunteer
- * 2017 American Association of Museums, national conference volunteer
- * 2012 - 2014 "Leave No Child Inside" Consortium of the Greater Barrington, Deer Park, and Lake Zurich area Steering Committee Member for new regional collaborative
- * 2012 Boy Scouts of America – Bear Claw award for exemplary work with Pack 14
- * 2010 – 2014 Elgin Community Garden Network Site Steward and Garden Consultant