

Name: Steve Stearns

Position: Park Volunteer and Eighth Grade Science Teacher at Larned Middle School

Park or Program: Fort Larned National Historic Site



Ribbon-cutting for the new butterfly garden
Pictured from left to right: Ranger Ellen Jones, Steve,
and Superintendent Betty Boyko

1. Tell us what you do as a volunteer.

I make sure all our Fort Larned visitors can enjoy our new Butterfly Garden by maintaining its features: flowering plants, life-size iron mules pulling a flowering vine and pioneer wagon, wind sculpture, painted stone caterpillars and insects, and pathways.

2. What's your day job?

I work as an eighth grade teacher for Science, Environmental Science, and Computers at Larned Middle School.

3. Why do you choose to volunteer for the NPS?

The NPS wanted a Butterfly Garden and our middle school wanted to help build it. And it turned out to be a great community project. We had police officers, teachers, spouses, and kids of all ages helping to build the Butterfly Garden. Now we have a great stopping-off place for our winged friends.

4. What is your favorite memory in a national park?

I used to live in Colorado, and they have great mountains. Having a picnic in the mountains on 4th of July and it snowed. What a childhood memory. Crazy fun!

5. What is the most significant thing you've learned through volunteer work?

It should not be called volunteer work. It is too much fun and rewarding.

6. If you could tell every NPS employee one thing about the volunteer program, what would it be?

Please come out and join us in the sunshine.

7. What else would we find you doing in your spare time?

I take care of the flowers for our Larned Methodist Church too. Recently, I spoke to the Larned Flower Club to see if we can enhance our town's welcome sign with new flowers to enhance visitor and town folk viewing pleasure. Lastly, I'm working with our Fort Larned rangers to expand our Butterfly Garden.