

Interview with Ranger Emily, Docent for the Neill Log House

Tony Indovina, with Park Ranger Emily Ehrenberger

As we near what may be the midpoint of the first season of FONLH opening the Neill Log House to visitors, we are pleased to formally introduce the individual who has become the person who greets most people who visit there—Pittsburgh City Park Ranger Emily Ehrenberger.

Helen Wilson and I first had the pleasure of meeting and working with Ranger Emily more than a year ago, when she approached SHHS for help with Frick Park history for a project she was assigned as a seasonal Ranger, to put together some pieces to help educate both the Ranger staff and visitors to the park about its history.

As we interacted with Emily, who subsequently became a member of SHHS and shared her work with us, I was surprised to learn that she graduated from the northern suburban school district from which I retired as a high-school counselor after thirty-one years—Shaler Area High School. Though Emily graduated some years after I retired, we both knew some of the same teachers and counselors there. I had worked with one of her distant cousins in my early years.



When the decision was made by the CEO of Pittsburgh Parks and Recreation to form a collaboration with FONLH for a ranger to be assigned to the Neill Log House beginning this season, Helen and I were pleased to be able to work with Emily as the person assigned this duty. We and our FONLH Executive Committee now actively work with Emily and her Supervisor, Ranger Erica Heide, to set the schedule that is now maintained on the City Parks website, and coordinate all other duties Ranger Emily assumes at the Neill Log House two to three days a week as part of her total job responsibilities. Emily's position has now been elevated to full-time at both Frick and Schenley Parks. For the current schedule of openings and how to schedule a private tour, follow the link to the Neill Log House on the SHHS website, squirrelhillhistory.org, or go directly to the City site at <https://www.pittsburghpa.gov/Recreation-Events/Park-Facilities/The-Neill-Log-House>.



Recently, I had the opportunity to interview Emily for our newsletter. Here is the new “Face” of the Neill Log House—Ranger Emily Ehrenberger!

Q. Can you briefly describe your job description and all of your duties as a City Park Ranger, and how your presence at the Neill Log House fits in with your duties every week?

A. My role as a City Park Ranger is very interdisciplinary. Part of our job falls within the realm of public safety, with duties such as patrolling the parks, enforcing city ordinances, and assisting in emergency response. The other half of the job involves parks and recreation, with duties such as facilitating public programming, visiting schools and senior centers, leading

guided hikes, and more. My presence at the Neill Log House aligns perfectly with the parks and recreation realm of my job, as it gives me a chance to lead public programming in a historical landmark and spread knowledge about Schenley Park's history to visitors.

Q. Do you anticipate that you will maintain your involvement with our project during the off-season and into the fall and winter in other ways than working with the public visiting the house?

A. During the off-season, I envision continuing to offer private tours for any group that would like to schedule one, whether that be for a family researching their heritage or a school group that expressed interest. I would also like to plan a few special events during the colder months to keep up the excitement surrounding the log house.

Click here to return to Neill Log House Update

July 2025

This could be anything from a “spooky” storytelling program around Halloween, a history hike, or a spinning wheel demonstration.

Q. Have those experiences prepared you for other work you see that you might be involved in with the history of the Neill Log House?

A. When I first was hired as a ranger in Frick Park, I was interested in learning more about the park’s history, both out of genuine curiosity and as a way to connect with park guests. I ended up creating a historical timeline of Frick Park that we display at pop-up events, as well as many social media posts pertaining to the park’s history. I think this gave me some great experience in being able to communicate historical knowledge in an entertaining and accessible way.

Q. Can we go back and have you share your post-secondary educational and any significant work experiences, and explain how these prepared you to become a City Park Ranger?

A. I graduated from the University of Pittsburgh in 2023 with a B.A. in Environmental Studies and a Certificate of Sustainability. During my time in college, I completed an internship with the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy as a Community Engagement Intern, which gave me some hands-on experience working within the Pittsburgh parks system. Although I wasn’t sure exactly which direction I wanted to take my career, I knew parks and recreation was one of my main interests.

I ended up applying for a part-time position as a City Park Ranger because of this interest, and have been here ever since. During this period, I also worked as a barista and for Friends of the Riverfront as a Seasonal Crew Leader, the latter of which gave me even more valuable experience working in the environmental field.

Q. How did you first decide to become a Park Ranger and in what ways can you say that your docent work for the Neill Log House is fulfilling the reasons that you first had?

A. My interest in becoming a park ranger stems from my love for parks. Green spaces, especially within the confines of a city, are places to sit back and relax, meet with your friends, create memories, and build community. As a Pittsburgh native, one of the things I love most about this city is the lush and expansive parks system we have. I truly feel grateful to play a role in keeping these parks safe and beautiful.

One of my goals as a ranger is to broaden the scope of our programming to include a wider range of interests, such as art and history. I think the Neill Log House is a wonderful addition to the repertoire of ranger-sponsored public programming and fills a space that was previously underrepresented.

Q. Please go back further yet and share some of your earliest life and educational experiences that may have prepared you for what you are now doing—are there any individuals from our high school who may have strongly influenced you in where you are now in your life?

A. As with many people, most of my main interests and goals stemmed from when I was in high school. My two favorite subjects were history and English. I remember being particularly influenced by my AP U.S. History teacher, whose enthusiasm for the subject, genuine care for the students, and ability to accommodate constructive criticism, inspired me.

I also first became interested in sustainability around this age due to the Gifted Education Program’s involvement in the subject. Each year we participated in the Phipps Conservatory Fairchild Challenge, which centered around environmental education initiatives. This helped me realize the importance of sustainability and was one of the driving factors in my decision to major in Environmental Studies in college.

Q. Is there anything else you think our readers would like to know about you?

A. At work, I have been deemed the “artsy” ranger! I enjoy a variety of crafts in my free time. I love to crochet, make jewelry, and paint. Whenever we need a new craft for a program, my supervisor always counts on me to come up with an idea.

My interest in arts & crafting inspired me to create the “Art in the Park” program, which is a monthly free canvas painting event during the warmer months. During this event, we welcome people of all ages and skill levels to come to the park and let nature inspire them. It’s a lot of fun seeing what art people create!