



## First Time Ever Experiences

by Ken Leinbach, Executive Director

The Urban Ecology Center is a place of “firsts” for many in our community. Some of our younger students see Lake Michigan for the very first time while walking on the sandy beach during one of our Summer Camps. Families have had their very first time ice skating on a cold day in Washington Park. Last winter we had visitors from Nepal who enjoyed their first sled ride down the hill in Riverside Park. A big perk that comes from working at the Urban Ecology Center is being part of those “firsts” – those times of wonder in the outdoors.

This fall I was reminded of the special “firsts” I’ve been privy to at the Center when I had one of my own. It didn’t occur in the city, but the feeling of wonder and connection in nature is universal – no matter where you are.

I’ve been on many wilderness expeditions, but for me this trip to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness offered two very special “firsts.” After receiving the invite one “first” was expected, the other was a complete and profound surprise.

My first “first” was using a genuine birch bark canoe as a utility boat. It was light, cut the water well and a joy to handle. It was only 175 years ago that birch bark canoes graced the waters of the Milwaukee, the Menomonee and the Kinnickinnic rivers. They are beautiful boats that had been in use as the primary river transportation in these parts for thousands of years. I’ve seen them in museums and I think I may have touched one once, but never did I dream of actually using one. That is until I received the email inviting me on this trip.

The cool thing is that we didn’t just “try it out” for half an hour on calm

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## The Intersection of Ecology and Art

by Beth Heller, Senior Director of Education and Strategic Planning

“I realized I truly wanted to study ecology – a seed that was planted during my time at [the Urban Ecology Center] but took a few years to sprout.”

This is the opening line of an email from a former High School Outdoor Leader, Robby Friedlen, to Riverside Park Branch Manager, Jamie Ferschinger. He was eager to share the reason behind his decision to shift his research studies to “the intersection of ecology – through the lens of permaculture – and the arts.” As a High School Outdoor Leader in 2009, Robby spent a portion of his summer working with internationally known artist Roy Staab. With the assistance of Robby and his high school colleagues, Staab used nettles growing along the river to create 100 foot-long natural cables that were draped over branches of tall trees to create a massive, suspended, swaying sculpture.



A Frog In The Bucket  
by Cynthia Brinich Langlois

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## Branch Highlights

### RIVERSIDE PARK

Looking for a place to use the cross-country skis you borrow from the Urban Ecology Center? This winter we will be leaving some of the trails in the arboretum un-plowed to provide a ski trail for you to enjoy.

### WASHINGTON PARK

Winter is here and soon the Washington Park lagoon will be open for ice skating! Contributing members can borrow our skates for free as a part of our Equipment Lending benefit. We follow Milwaukee County Park standards to ensure that it is thick enough for skating. Become a member today and get out on the ice!

### MENOMONEE VALLEY

Art in the Valley is in full swing! We had an amazing response to our call for artists to display in our gallery space so we are going to have two shows this year. Keep an eye on our website for an announcement of the artists! The first show will begin in February; see page 9 for details of the opening reception.



## Hide and Seek

by Jaime Cano, Visitor Services Specialist

It was 5pm on a late fall, Friday evening and I was enjoying a cup of hot chocolate at the Menomonee Valley branch's reception desk. A group of our regular youth visitors were running around the building as it was too dark outside to explore Three Bridges Park and they were having too much fun to go home. It was a quiet evening, perfect for kids to just hang out and be themselves in our safe community center. I couldn't see anybody around, but I could hear little feet moving fast.

Suddenly a little one appeared, "Mister Jaime, I can hide under ... your table?" I answered "Absolutely! And here, use my sweater to cover you. That way it's harder to find you."

"Thank you, Mister Jaime," he replied.

One minute later, I heard a big "aahhhh" and "Sofia, I see you," followed it. The next 30 seconds were full of continuous yelling and running. Meanwhile, the little kid hiding under the table listened quietly, feeling very secure in his possibility of winning.

The kid who was "it" came to my desk near the little one's hiding place. He was very excited

about the game and was doing a really great job. He had found almost everyone! The rule was that the last kid to be found was the winner and was the next one to be "it," so the stakes were high! He took a quick look under my table and left. I smiled. Two minutes later, a couple of kids were found and the game was over. My little hider had won!

To me, this moment is what the Urban Ecology Center is about. Playing Hide and Seek in a safe place is a memory commonly passed down and told to children by children. In this same way, we want to create experiences that are talked about and taught from child to child, becoming living memories inside of them all.

The Menomonee Valley branch, like the little kid under my desk, is hidden, like a precious stone that has to be found, but once it's found — it's a winner. It's a place for fun, excitement, learning and unity. A place where generations and generations of visitors, Young Scientists and volunteers can enjoy and share with each other and their loved ones. And most importantly, it's a place where they can come back, a place where they are always welcome and at home. 🌿

## Thank You to Our Contributing Members

Many thanks to the local foundations, corporations and individuals who have donated to the Center. The complete list of contributing members who have given within the last two months can be found on our website at [www.urbanecologycenter.org/thankyoulist](http://www.urbanecologycenter.org/thankyoulist).

### Credits:



**Carijean Buhk**  
Editor

The Urban Ecology Center Newsletter is created and distributed through a team effort by the following people: Carijean Buhk, Matthew Gnass, Judy Krause, Jeff McAvoy and Pat Mueller.

Contributing writers: Jaime Cano, Laurel Cutright, Beth Heller and Ken Leinbach.

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## DROPLETS

LEARN MORE ABOUT THESE TOPICS ON OUR WEBSITE

- **We're accepting applications for our summer internships!** Apply for a 10-week internship in Volunteer Coordination, Visitor Services, Green Building Management and Research, Environmental Education, Community Education or Citizen Science. Twelve week internships in Land Stewardship or Marketing are also available. Check out the job listings on our website for details.
- **Wish List.** Below are some items we need for our three branches. Visit [urbanecologycenter.org/wishlist](http://urbanecologycenter.org/wishlist) for an expanded list.

### Riverside Park

Anabat detector  
Blenders  
HD quality video camera  
GoPro camera  
Log splitter  
Matched set of heavy bottom, stainless steel cookware (Pots, pans, skillets)  
Terry cotton towels (new or used)  
Trimble Juno GPS  
Spray bottles

### Washington Park

8ft folding tables  
Bicycle air pump (stand-up)  
Chopping knives  
Large crock pots or nescos with lids (3)  
Large, 2-handled pots with lids (3)  
Lego/blocks/K'Nex building toys  
Podium  
Wooden high chairs

### Menomonee Valley

Digital camera  
Field/trail cameras (3)  
GPS units  
LED flashlights (3)  
Lightweight folding tables (2)  
Musical instruments  
Terry cloth rags  
Yoga mats (20)

**SEE FOR YOURSELF!** (No really, see what's happened with your support)



**THANK YOU**  
for helping make great things  
**POSSUMble**



You've donated over

**\$99,830**

to our **Fall Fund Drive!** (total as of 12/16/15)

On Giving Tuesday our staff donated \$3041 and asked you to meet or beat that amount. In response you generously gave



**\$5,002**  
in one day!



A huge thanks to the **277 donors** who have given or pledged during this drive!

(total as of 12/16/15)

Your support helps youth and adults explore, learn, grow, work and play outdoors. Together we're making a positive change, neighborhood by neighborhood.

It's not too late to help. Please visit [urbanecologycenter.org](http://urbanecologycenter.org) and donate today.





## Freedom and Discovery in Class

by Laurel Cutright, Environmental Educator

Recently I brought a group of third graders to Washington Park to study ecosystems. The main idea of the class was to learn how living and non-living things interact in different habitats. I've come to love this class because it provides space and time for students to simply be in those places.

We started our class in the Lloyd Street Prairie, a restoration project started in Washington Park in 2010. Each student was asked to observe plants, animals and other features of the prairie and record their descriptions on a worksheet. They quickly realized that there was no rush to complete the sheet, they had ample time to explore. I could see them relax into being outside, free of micromanagement. They began to look closely at their surroundings, noticing the grass growing over their heads, faded autumn flowers and seeds of all shapes. They delighted in releasing fluffy milkweed seeds and closely examining slow-moving milkweed beetles. One student spotted the gigantic, speckled leaf of a prairie dock. He asked permission to touch it, to which I replied, "Of course!" When he felt the unexpectedly sand-papery texture, his eyes lit up and he exclaimed, "Woah!"

Students collected data using air and soil thermometers and used anemometers to measure wind speed. Along with this data and their observations, the students were also asked to record how they felt in the ecosystem. It really struck me that most of their answers were "calm" and "peaceful."

We moved on to the woodlands area, filled with recently planted shrubs as well as towering oak trees. The students delved in deep and found berries, leaves of all shapes, ants, squirrel homes and even tiny snail shells. One girl found a fuzzy pink and white gall on the underside of an oak leaf. This led to a discussion of the life cycle of the oak leaf gall wasp, which lays eggs in the bud of the tree and tricks the tree into forming a protective layer of tissue around its larvae. She asked if she could bring it back to school for her science class, and when I agreed she said, "This is SO COOL!"

As a child I was fortunate to have many hours to independently explore outdoors. I navigated easily through well-worn deer trails, knew the shape of each climbing tree on our land and witnessed the daily shift through seasonal patterns. This is undoubtedly a major reason

that I became both an environmentalist and an environmental educator. As an adult, I get to spend several hours teaching outside in Washington Park, but I also love to walk, bike, canoe and relax in the park on my own time. I've learned to appreciate the many beautiful things I never expected to find in Milwaukee: morning fog drifting across the lagoon, the heron that stands sentinel on the shoreline, the autumn changes sweeping through the leaves of maple, beech and locust trees. It's this freedom in and appreciation of the outdoors that I hope to impart to the students.

Every day the educators at the Urban Ecology Center try to model our deep appreciation and sense of stewardship for the students. By allowing them the time for discovery excitement, and self-directed learning, we hope to help them form feelings of engagement with the natural world. Every day I remind students that the Urban Ecology Center is here for them, and that these parks are theirs to explore and to care for. 🌿



2016

# SUMMER CAMPS

Week-long day camps for  
**Preschool - 8<sup>th</sup> grade**

*Scholarships Available*

Registration starts  
January 12, 2016

JANUARY & FEBRUARY

## Quick Guide

An abbreviated listing of what's happening at the Urban Ecology Center. Find full descriptions and register online at [www.urbanecologycenter.org/calendar](http://www.urbanecologycenter.org/calendar)

Saturday,  
Jan. 23



**Winterfest  
for Afternoon Nappers**  
10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

**A festival for the lil' ones!** Children ages 5 and under accompanied by an adult can enjoy a morning of fun including a craft, hike and puppets show, and still get home in time for their afternoon nap. Registration required. Please register all children. Space is limited. (WP).

**For children ages 5 and younger accompanied by an adult**  
\$5 (Nonmembers: \$7)



**Winter in Washington Park is a special time.** With the lagoon frozen over and the hills covered in snow, it's the perfect place for an afternoon of adventure. **JOIN US for some family winter fun!** We have a lot for you to enjoy, including: a sled demonstration, ice skating, sledding, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, arts and crafts and more! Warm up with free food and beverages and enjoy the company of your neighbors.  
**For everyone | FREE - donations appreciated**

## Snowtopia

**Sun., Feb. 14** Riverside Park  
1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
**Sat., Feb. 27** Menomonee Valley  
1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

**Join the fun for a second season of snow-scaping and help build a city of snow structures.** All ages are invited to spend the afternoon building our Snow City, replete with sky scraping snow castles and a kingdom of snow folk. We need all hands on deck to prepare for Snowtopia so bring yourself, your friends and your family to see what this the epic and magical event is all about! Warm up with hot chocolate around a fire. This event is dependent on snow conditions. **For everyone | Free- donations appreciated**

### HOLIDAY CLOSINGS & SPECIAL HOURS

All Urban Ecology Center branches are closed January 1st, and are open from noon-4pm on January 2<sup>nd</sup>. We return to normal hours (as listed on page 11) on January 4<sup>th</sup>.

#### RIVERSIDE PARK



WHOO is in the forest? Join us for **Owl Prowls** during the months of January and February. We will be offering Owl Prowls for both adults and families. Also, learn about **Tree Anatomy and Physiology** in a series with our Forester Caitlin Reinartz. Be sure to save the date for the **Local Farmer Open House** on March 12<sup>th</sup>.

— Jamie Ferschinger,  
Branch Manager - Riverside Park

#### WASHINGTON PARK



**Winterfest** is here again! Join us on Saturday, January 23<sup>rd</sup> to celebrate winter with great activities for everyone. Enjoy a sled dog demonstration, ice skating, sledding, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, arts and crafts! Warm up with free food and beverages. But the fun doesn't end there! Join us for a **Candlelight Ski and Snowshoe** or try something new at **Beginning Cross-country Skiing** or **Snowshoeing for Beginners**.

— Terry Evans,  
Branch Manager - Washington Park

#### MENOMONEE VALLEY



We are definitely not hibernating this winter! We have many different ways for you to get out and enjoy the winter weather — whether you like **skiing, snowshoeing, sledding**, or just enjoying a cup of hot cocoa! We're particularly excited to be offering several opportunities to enjoy **Music Under Glass – by Snowshoe!** And don't forget to join us as we create our very own **Snowtopia in Three Bridges Park!**

— Glenna Holstein,  
Branch Manager - Menomonee Valley

This events guide gives you a “snapshot” view of the programs and events happening at the Urban Ecology Center's three branches. Full descriptions and details can be found on our website at [www.urbanecologycenter.org/calendar](http://www.urbanecologycenter.org/calendar)

## Quick Guide

### Family Cooking Classes

#### National Day of Service Family Soup Making

Take this all-ages, hands on class and help someone in need. We'll make two vegetarian soups, eat some for lunch and deliver a batch to a local meal program. Children under 10 years old must be accompanied by an adult. Registration required by Jan 15<sup>th</sup>.

**(RP)** Mon., Jan. 18 | 9:30 - 11AM  
For adults and kids | Individuals: \$12, (Nonmembers: \$18) Families: \$22 (Nonmembers: \$34)

#### Winter Quick Breads

In this all-ages, hands on class we will prepare non-yeasted quick breads (including gluten-free varieties). Bring a container. Children under 10 years old must be accompanied by an adult. Register by Jan 19<sup>th</sup>.

**(RP)** Fri., Jan. 22 | 9:30 - 11AM  
For adults and kids | Individuals: \$12, (Nonmembers: \$18) Families: \$22 (Nonmembers: \$34)

#### Korean-Mexican Fusion Cooking Class

Explore the flavors of Korea and Mexico through this interactive cooking demonstration. Learn how to make Kimchi Quesadillas, Fusion Style Tacos and more! Register by January 27<sup>th</sup>.

**(MV)** Sat., Jan. 30 | 2 - 3:30PM  
For families | Free for Young Scientist Club members (Nonmembers: \$5)

#### Too Good To Be True Dessert

In this all-ages, hands on class we'll put a healthier spin on sweets like brownies, chocolate chip cookies and vanilla cupcakes. Children under 10 years old must be accompanied by an adult. Register by February 12<sup>th</sup>.

**(RP)** Feb., 2 | 9:30 - 11AM  
For kids and adults | Individuals: \$12, (Nonmembers: \$18) Families: \$22 (Nonmembers: \$34)

#### Little Explorers:

##### Friday Morning Playgroup

Explore with us! Our activities are specifically designed to engage the senses of kids ages 4 and under.

**(MV)** Fri., Jan. 8 & Feb.

12 | 11AM - noon  
For children ages 4 and younger | Free - donations appreciated

##### Saturday Preschool Series: Winter Fun

Bring your youngster, ages 3-5 years old and enjoy a mix of seasonal indoor and outdoor play, songs, stories and crafts. Dress for the outdoors.

**(RP)** Sat., Jan. 9 | 10 - 11:30 AM  
For children ages 3-5 accompanied by an adult | Adults: \$5 (Nonmembers: \$7) Children: \$3 (Nonmembers: \$5);

##### Family Astronomy in the Park

The early darkness of winter means we can stargaze before bed time! Come learn the science of the solar system and search for the stars and planets we can see from our own backyards.

**(WP)** Wed., Jan. 13 | 6 - 8PM  
For adults and accompanied children | Adults: \$6 (Nonmembers: \$9) Children: \$4 (Nonmembers: \$7)

##### Let's Build a Snow Shelter!

Learn how you can build a simple snow shelter at home — just like the one we have at Winterfest! Dress in warm, waterproof layers.

**(WP)** Sat., Jan. 16 | 10 - 11:30AM  
For everyone | Adults: \$6 (Nonmembers: \$9) Children: \$4 (Nonmembers: \$7)

##### Owl Prowl for Families

A wintry forest just after dark is the perfect place to look and listen for our nocturnal friends, the owls. Bundle up for a fun and educational hike.

**(RP)** Tue., Jan. 26 & Feb.  
23 | 6 - 7:30PM  
For families | Adults: \$6 (Nonmembers: \$9) Children: \$4 (Nonmembers: \$6)

#### Origami Workshop

In this free workshop you will learn how to make a fox, cat and more.

**(MV)** Sat., Jan. 30 | 10 - 11AM  
For everyone | Free - donations appreciated

#### Martial Arts

Hosted by Above the Clouds Martial arts training teaches kids and teens respect and self-confidence. No experience needed! Register at [abovethecloudsmilwaukee.com](http://abovethecloudsmilwaukee.com) or at the door.

**(MV)** Every Wed. starting  
Jan. 27 | 5:30 - 6:30PM  
For youth ages 9-15 | Free - donations appreciated

#### Snakes in Winter

Ever wonder where snakes go in the winter? The answer might surprise you! Help solve the mystery of the disappearing snakes. You'll also get to meet our resident Bullsnake.

**(MV)** Tue., Feb. 9 | 4 - 6PM  
For children aged 5-12 | Free - donations appreciated

#### Valentine's Day Crafting

Be eco-friendly this Valentine's Day. Stop in between 9am-4pm to create your own cards and decorations for friends and loved ones.

**(MV)** Sat., Feb. 13 | Drop  
in between 9AM - 4PM  
For everyone | Free - donations appreciated

#### Nature Rangers

Create research projects and more! Sign up for either the Monday or Tuesday session. Fee covers all sessions in January and February.

**(RP)** Every Mon. or every Tue. |  
4 - 5:30PM  
For children ages 5 and older |  
\$10 (Nonmember: \$15)

#### Matrix Math Club

Learn the symbols, secrets and codes hidden in math.

**(MV)** Every Tue. & Thu.,  
Jan. 5 | 3 - 4PM  
For children aged 5-12 | Free - donations appreciated

#### EcoArt Wednesdays

Join us for nature inspired recycled arts and crafts.

**(MV)** Every Wed. | 4 - 5:30PM  
For families with children age 12 and younger | Free for Young Scientist Club members (Nonmembers: \$5 per child)

#### Young Scientists Club

Every day is a new adventure.

**(WP)** Every Tue. - Fri. | 4 - 6PM  
and Every Sat. | 1 - 4PM  
For ages 7-12 | \$10 annual membership

**(MV)** Every Tue. & Thu. | 4 - 6PM

and Every Sat. | 1 - 4PM  
For ages 5-12 | \$10 annual membership

#### Fire Time in the Rooftop Tipi

Drop in and enjoy the warmth and light of the fire in our rooftop tipi.

**(RP)** Sat., Jan. 2 | 10AM - 3PM  
For everyone | Free - donations appreciated

#### Animal Feeding

Help feed our resident animals.

**(RP)** **(WP)** & **(MV)** Every Sat. | 1PM  
For everyone | Free - donations appreciated

## HOMESCHOOL SERIES

### Mini Inquiries

Conduct mini inquiries to learn about different ways winter changes our parks. We'll help shape the inquiries for each session but the topic is up to you!

**(RP)** Tue., Jan. 19 | 1 - 3PM  
**(MV)** Tue., Feb. 2 | 1 - 3PM  
**(WP)** Tue., Feb. 16 | 1 - 3PM  
For children ages 5 and older |  
\$7 (Nonmember: \$10)

**3 WAYS TO REGISTER:**

**1 ONLINE:**  
[www.urbanecologycenter.org](http://www.urbanecologycenter.org)

**2 BY PHONE:**  
(414) 964-8505

**3 IN PERSON:**  
Just stop by!

**(RP)** = Riverside Park  
1500 E. Park Pl.

**(WP)** = Washington Park  
1859 N. 40<sup>th</sup> St.

**(MV)** = Menomonee Valley  
3700 W. Pierce St.



= Accessible for persons with disabilities  
Please call 2 weeks ahead of time

## Quick Guide

### Eco-Travel: Maine

#### Eco-travel: Sail Maine Information Session

Larn how you can spend four nights aboard a two-masted schooner sailing the coast of Maine! Trip is from May 30 to June 5, 2016 (see page 9 for details).

**(RP)** Thu., Jan. 28 | 5:30 - 6:30PM  
For adults | Free - donations appreciated

### Tree Anatomy and Physiology Series

This indoor, 4-week class will cover the basics of tree anatomy and physiology. Sign up for individual sessions or register for all four for the complete tree experience!

**Session 1: Tree Anatomy**  
**(RP)** Mon., Jan. 4 | 5 - 7PM

**Session 2: Photosynthesis  
And Respiration**

**(RP)** Mon., Jan. 11 | 5 - 7PM

**Session 3: Plant Hormones**

**(RP)** Mon., Jan. 18 | 5 - 7PM

**Session 4: Dormancy,  
Senescence, and Death**

**(RP)** Mon., Jan. 25 | 5 - 7PM  
For adults | \$7 per class  
(Nonmembers: \$10 per class)  
Volunteers: \$5 per class

### The State of Riverside Park (When Looking Up)

The Riverside Park Tree Survey was a four-year long project to catalog every tree with a diameter of 10cm or larger. Join Forester Caitlin Reinartz as she presents the survey results -- taking the magic of the forest and turning it into pie graphs, bar charts, super-cool facts and stats!

**(RP)** Tue., Feb. 9 | 7 - 8:30PM  
For adults | \$5 (Nonmembers: \$10)

### Date Night: A Guided Sunset Tour of Three Bridges Park

Looking for a romantic evening off the beaten path? Bring a partner or a friend for this unique sunset tour of Menomonee Valley's hidden gems. After our exploration, we'll build a fire on the back patio.

**(MV)** Fri., Feb. 12 | 5 - 6:30PM  
For adults | \$5 (Nonmembers: \$10)

### Fit 4 You Group Fitness Sessions

Hosted by Fit 4 You Traveling Trainer  
Experience fitness on a whole new level with dynamic stretching, endurance training, obstacle courses and more! Work at your own pace.

**(WP)** Every Tue. | 6 - 7:30PM  
For everyone | \$5 (Nonmembers: \$10)

### Trending Ups and Downs in Wisconsin's World of Insects

From explosions of spring caterpillars to giant moths and invasive beetles, 2015 was quite a year for insects. Luckily, Patrick Leisch and his colleagues at the UW-Madison Insect Diagnostic Lab kept track of it all. Learn past and future insect trends.

**(MV)** Tue., Jan. 12 | 7 - 8:30PM  
For adults | Free - donations appreciated

### Owl Prowl for Adults

A winter night hike is the best time to hear the hoots of our nocturnal raptors, the owls. We'll take a look into owl behaviors and adaptations then head out to listen for hoots.

**(RP)** Tue., Jan. 12 & Feb. 9 | 6:30 - 8PM  
For adults | \$5 (Nonmembers: \$7)

### From Beak to Tail:

#### All About the Life of Birds

Take an in-depth look into birds. The program features a dusk walk. Binoculars provided.

**(WP)** Sat., Jan. 16 | 2:30 - 4PM  
**(RP)** Sat., Feb. 13 | 3 - 4:30PM  
For adults | \$5 (Nonmembers: \$10)

### Photo Phenology

Bring your camera and take pictures of the Valley over the changing seasons!

**(MV)** Sat., Jan. 23 Feb.  
27 | 10 - 11:30AM  
For adults, teens and families |  
Free - donations appreciated

### The Art and Science of Massage

Learn the art and science behind giving a good, full body massage. Partners are required. Please register by February 12<sup>th</sup> at 5pm.

**(RP)** Sun., Feb. 14 | 2 - 4PM  
For adults | \$20 per couple  
(Nonmembers: \$30 per couple)

### Fishing for Dinner Series

Learn basic fishing skills and where to find fishable waters. A chef will show you how to prepare your catch. We'll begin with indoor sessions to prepare you for ice fishing and spring open water outings. Gear provided.

**(WP)** Wed., Jan. 27 &  
Feb. 3 & 10 | 6 - 9PM  
For adults | Free - donations appreciated

### Birding like a Pro: eBird and the Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas 2

eBird is a website designed to help amateurs and professionals alike. Learn the basics of eBird, the Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas and how you can get involved in Wisconsin's largest Citizen Science project ever!

**(RP)** Thu., Feb. 4 | 5:30 - 6:30PM  
For adults | \$5 (Nonmembers: \$10)

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

### Volunteer Orientation

Come find out how you can contribute your time and talents to the Center.

**(RP)** Sat., Jan. 9 | 10:30AM - noon  
**(RP)** Wed., Jan. 20 | 5:30 - 7PM  
**(RP)** Sat., Feb. 13 | 10:30AM - NOON  
**(RP)** Fri., Feb. 19 | 3 - 4:30PM  
**(RP)** Mon., Feb. 29 | 5:30 - 7PM

**(WP)** Sat., Jan. 16 | 10:30 - 11:30AM  
**(WP)** Tue., Jan. 26 | 5 - 6PM  
**(WP)** Tue., Feb. 9 | 5 - 6PM  
**(WP)** Sat., Feb. 27 | 10:30 - 11:30AM

**(MV)** Wed., Jan. 6 | 5:30 - 7PM  
**(MV)** Tue., Jan. 19 | 5:30 - 7PM  
**(MV)** Sat., Feb. 6 | 10:30AM - noon  
**(MV)** Tue., Feb. 23 | 5:30 - 7PM

For adults and teens | Free -  
donations appreciated

### Fixin' Facilities

Help with anything from building and painting, to repair and upkeep projects.

**(RP)** Every Wed. | 3 - 5PM  
For adults, families and teens |  
Free - donations appreciated

### Youth Project Squad

Work on various projects while learning new skills from our staff.

**(MV)** Sats., Jan. 9, Feb. 6 |  
NOON - 2PM  
**(MV)** Thu., Feb. 18 | 4 - 6PM  
For families and teens | Free  
- donations appreciated

### Weekly volunteer opportunities

Find these weekly events on our website  
ROOT (Restore Our Outdoor Treasures)  
Volunteer Papermaking  
Volunteer Park Ranger Crew

## INTEREST GROUPS

### Ojibwe Language Study Group

**(RP)** Every Mon. | 6 - 8PM

### Community Vegan Potluck

**(RP)** Tues., Jan. 5 & Feb. 2 | 6:30 - 8PM

### Photo Club

**(RP)** Thus., Jan. 7 & Feb. 4  
6:30 - 9PM

### 350.org General Meeting

**(RP)** Tues. Jan. 12 & Feb. 9  
7 - 8:30PM

### Friends of Real Food: Potluck Dinner and Program

**(RP)** Wed., Jan. 13 | 6 - 8PM

### Good Food Book Club

**(RP)** Thu., Feb. 11 | 7 - 8PM

### Faith and Ecology

**(RP)** Tues., Jan. 19 & Feb. 16 |  
7 - 8:30PM

### Urban Echo Poets

**(RP)** Thus., Jan. 14 & Feb. 11  
7 - 8:30PM

### Urban Stargazers

**(RP)** Thus., Jan. 14 & Feb. 11  
7 - 8:30PM

### Transition Milwaukee: All City Hub Meeting

**(RP)** Mons., Jan. 25 & Feb.  
22 | 6:30 - 8:30PM

### Early Morning Birdwalks

**(MV)** Every Tue. | 8am  
**(WP)** Every Wed. | 8am  
**(RP)** Every Thu. | 8am



## Quick Guide

### Sledding the Slopes of Menomonee Valley

Join us for an evening of sledding in Three Bridges Park. We'll warm up with hot chocolate too. If there is no snow, we will hike.

**(MV)** Thu., Jan. 14 & Feb. 4 | 4 - 6PM

**(MV)** Tue., Jan. 26 & Feb. 16 | 4 - 6PM  
For families and teens | Free - donations appreciated

### Candlelight Ski and Snowshoe

Spend a wintery night skiing and snowshoeing in Washington Park by candlelight! All skill levels welcome and equipment is provided. Please register by February 15th.

**(WP)** Wed., Feb. 17 | 7 - 9PM

For adults and accompanied youth | Adults: \$6 (Nonmembers: \$9) Children: \$4 (Nonmembers: \$7)

### Winter Camping Crash Course

Winter camping can be a beautiful and memorable experience, but it does take a bit of know-how. Learn basic winter camping skills and get ready to jump headfirst into winter!

**(RP)** Sun., Feb. 21 | 1:30 - 3PM

For adults | \$5 (Nonmembers: \$7)

### Snowshoeing

#### Beginning

### Snowshoeing for Beginners

For thousands of years, snowshoeing has been an important form of travel and recreation in cold-weather climates. Join us to learn the basics of this classic sport. Equipment provided. Make sure to dress in layers and wear waterproof footwear.

**(MV)** Sat., Jan. 16 | 10 - 11:30AM

**(MV)** Sat., Jan. 30 | 10 - 11:30AM

**(MV)** Sat., Feb. 13 | 10 - 11:30AM

**(MV)** Sat., Feb. 27 | 10 - 11:30AM

**(WP)** Sat., Jan. 9 | 10 - 11:30AM

**(WP)** Sat., Feb. 6 | 10 - 11:30AM

**(WP)** Sat., Feb. 20 | 10 - 11:30AM

For adults and accompanied children | Adults: \$6 (Nonmembers: \$9) Children: \$4 (Nonmembers: \$7)

#### Multi-level

### Music Under Glass — by Snowshoe!

Come on a snowshoeing adventure through Three Bridges Park as we head to the Mitchell Park Domes for a Music Under Glass concert! Snowshoes, admission to the Domes and transportation back to our Menomonee Valley branch included. Have fun with friends, new and old! (If there's no snow, we'll hike.)

**(MV)** Thus., Jan. 28, Feb.

11 & 25 | 5 - 9PM

For adults and teens | \$15 (Nonmembers: \$20)

### Cross-Country Skiing

#### Beginning

### Beginning Cross-Country Skiing for Adults

Enjoy a twilight cross-country ski lesson and learn basic techniques that will get you out exploring this winter. All equipment provided. Registration is required by January 2<sup>th</sup>.

**(RP)** Mon., Jan. 4 | 5 - 7PM

For adults and teens | \$10 (Nonmembers: \$15)

### Beginning Cross-country Skiing for Kids

Time to get your children excited for winter! Bring them to this workshop designed just for kids. Kids and families will learn basic cross-country skiing skills, then explore with us. Make sure to bundle up. We'll provide the gear.

**(RP)** Mon., Jan. 18 | 4 - 6PM

**(RP)** Mon., Feb. 15 | 4 - 6PM

For families and kids ages 6 and older | Adults: \$6 (Nonmembers: \$9)

Children: \$4 (Nonmembers: \$7)

*(Registration is required at least two days prior to the program date)*

**(MV)** Tue., Jan. 5 | 4 - 6PM

**(MV)** Thu., Jan. 28 | 4 - 6PM

**(MV)** Thu., Feb. 11 | 4 - 6PM

**(MV)** Tue., Feb. 23 | 4 - 6PM

For children aged 7-12 | Free for Young Scientist Club members (Nonmembers: \$5 per child)

### Beginning Cross-Country Skiing

Don't get stuck inside this winter — give cross-country skiing a try! We'll provide the gear and the instruction that'll have you hitting the slopes in no time. Be sure to dress in layers.

**(MV)** Sat., Jan. 9 | 9 - 10:30AM

**(MV)** Sat., Jan. 9 | 11AM - 12:30PM

**(MV)** Sat., Jan. 23 | 9 - 10:30AM

**(MV)** Sat., Jan. 23 | 11AM - 12:30PM

**(MV)** Sat., Feb. 6 | 9 - 10:30AM

**(MV)** Sat., Feb. 6 | 11AM - 12:30PM

**(RP)** Mon., Feb. 1 | 5 - 7PM

*(Registration is required at least two days prior to the program date)*

**(WP)** Sat., Jan. 16 | 10 - 11:30AM

**(WP)** Sat., Jan. 30 | 10 - 11:30AM

**(WP)** Sat., Feb. 13 | 10 - 11:30AM

**(WP)** Sat., Feb. 27 | 10 - 11:30AM

For adults and accompanied children |

Adults: \$6 (Nonmembers: \$9)

Children: \$4 (Nonmembers: \$7)

#### Intermediate

### Intermediate Cross-country Skiing Expedition to Brown Deer Park

Come with us for a snowy ski adventure in Brown Deer Park! Practice your cross-country skiing skills and learn how to navigate hills. Equipment and transportation from Riverside Park provided. Registration is required at least two days prior to the program.

**(RP)** Sats., Jan. 16 & Feb.

20 | 9:30AM - 12:30PM

For adults | \$15 (Nonmembers: \$20)

#### Advanced

### Advanced Cross-Country Skiing Expedition to Lapham Peak

Come with us for a snowy ski adventure at Lapham Peak! We will hone our skills on a trail with steep hills and sharp turns. Equipment and transportation from Washington Park provided. Registration is required at least two days prior to the program.

**(WP)** Sat., Feb. 20 | 9:30AM - 12:30PM

For adults | \$15 (Nonmembers: \$20)

#### Multi-level

### Night Skiing in Three Bridges Park

Up for an after-dark adventure? Beginners and experts alike — join us as we hit the slopes at night. Dress in layers and we'll provide the gear. Enjoy hot chocolate to end the night.

**(MV)** Wed., Jan. 6 Feb.

5 & 19 | 6 - 8PM

For adults and accompanied children |

Adults: \$6 (Nonmembers: \$9)

Children: \$4 (Nonmembers: \$7)

### Basic Cross-country Ski Maintenance

In this hands-on class, we will cover the basics of how to properly care for cross-country skis including the science and art of applying kick and glide wax. Learn how to use irons, brushes and wax for best ski care.

**(RP)** Sats., Jan. 9 & Feb. 13 | 10 - 11AM

**(RP)** Tues., Jan. 19 & Feb.

16 | 6:30 - 7:30PM

For adults and teens | \$5

(Nonmembers: \$7)

### Girl Scouts: Cross-Country Skiing at Menomonee Valley

Getting outside in winter is exciting! Experience the thousand year-old sport of cross country skiing as we explore Three Bridges Park. Please visit [www.gswise.org](http://www.gswise.org) to register.

**(MV)** Sat., Jan. 16 Feb.

20 | 9AM - noon

**(MV)** Sat., Jan. 16 or Feb. 20 | 1 - 4PM

For Juniors and Cadettes, grades 4-8 | Please visit [www.gswise.org](http://www.gswise.org) to register

### Ski Outing to Lapham Peak's Candlelight Ski

Join us for an evening of cross-country skiing, cider and a bonfire at Lapham Peak. We'll do the driving and provide skis, boots and poles for this fun winter adventure! Registration is required by January 29<sup>th</sup> at 5pm.

**(RP)** Sat., Jan. 30 | 5 - 10PM

For adults | \$20 (Nonmembers: \$25)

Sign up for our spontaneous "Snow and Go" email list to enjoy active winter fun! Send an email with "Snow and Go" in the subject line to [fsullivan@urbanecologycenter.org](mailto:fsullivan@urbanecologycenter.org)





## The Intersection of Ecology and Art

continued from page 1

"The experience of working with [Staab] has stuck with me through all these years ... I just wanted to let you know that my experience working at the UEC in high school has turned out to be more formative than I could have possibly imagined at the time, and has truly set me on my current course through life," wrote Robby.

Painters, sculptors, printers, photographers, graphic designers and many more visual artists are an important part of our mission. Their works help deepen our understanding of nature and the world around us. Science and art together can tell the story of an ecosystem, which is why we incorporate art into some of our Neighborhood Environmental Education Project classes and Summer Camps. In addition, each branch displays art that was an integral part of its opening — a giant mural in Washington Park's classroom by Eriks Johnson, a series of murals at Riverside in the slide, camouflage room and room dividers by Kitty Dyble Thompson and a large mosaic by Leann Wooten and community members at the Menomonee Valley. Robby's story reminded me how important all of those works are.

While the experience of working with Staab was a unique one, the opportunity to learn through art continues at the Center. As our current Art Committee Chair, Nancy Aten, shared, "It has been my hope to have the art program be more than just 'art on the wall'

— yes, art for appreciating nature and giving insight — but also art as a tool for teaching ecology, a conduit for understanding ecology, and a collaborator in studying ecology."

The Art Committee strives to not only provide venues for artists, but opportunities for community participation in the creation process. For example, last summer Plein Air artists painted in the Menomonee Valley, encouraged onlookers to ask questions about Plein Air techniques and showed their work in our Menomonee Valley branch gallery. We thank Nancy and the members of the Committee — Sally Dubackm Barbara Manger, Juan Lopez, Kristin Gjerdset and Jamie Bruchman for their dedication to the Center.

This winter as snow brightens our short days, tree trunks show off their reds, browns, greys and greens, I encourage you to explore outdoors and then stop in to each of our Centers for to warm up in the presence of this amazing art. On January 14<sup>th</sup>, an art opening for Cynthia Brinich-Langlois and Ken Vonderberg will be in the Riverside Park community room gallery and on February 11<sup>th</sup> the Menomonee Valley's gallery will highlight a collection of local artists' work.

Perhaps an experience with ecology and art at the Center could change your life, too. Why not come see for yourself? 🌱

### Upcoming Art Openings

#### Wood and Stone: Cynthia Brinich-Langlois and Ken Vonderberg

Enjoy the work of Cynthia Brinich-Langlois and Ken Vonderberg. Cynthia's work is a series of lithographic prints depicting a journey through changing environments. Ken Vonderberg uses pyrography, a wood burning process, to portray a wild landscape. His work calls attention to the beauty of nature as motivation for its protection and enjoyment.

#### Opening reception:

Riverside Park

Thursday, January 14, 5 - 7pm

Artists speak at 6pm

For everyone | Free - donations appreciated

#### Menomonee Valley Art Opening Reception

Take a fresh view of the world at an art show in the Menomonee Valley. Shows feature locally produced, nature-related artwork. Visit [urbanecologycenter.org/art](http://urbanecologycenter.org/art) for details.

#### Opening reception:

Menomonee Valley

Thursday, February 11, 5 - 7pm

Artists speak at 6pm

For everyone | Free - donations appreciated



## Save the Date!

### 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Local Farmer Open House

The best way to get farm fresh veggies aside from growing your own! Meet local farmers and learn how you can buy directly from a farmer through Community Supported Agriculture (CSA). Whether you are new to CSAs or have been subscribing for years, this event is for you. Attend workshops and stay for lunch! Food available to purchase.

Riverside Park | **Saturday, March 12** | 11AM - 3PM | Free!

## First Time Ever Experiences

continued from page 1

water in the sun, but we used it and abused it for six amazing full weather days way up north in the Boundary Waters, a million acre wilderness area near the Canadian border.

The gorgeous 14-foot birch bark canoe was made just last year by my friend Robin Wood of England, his daughter JoJo and Jarrod Dahl who lives on the Bad River reservation near Ashland, Wisconsin. Starting with only an axe and a knife, Jarrod, Robin and JoJo, located the perfect tree, stripped its bark, cut it and bent it into the general shape of a boat, lashing its ends together with the root of a spruce tree. They cut down a cedar tree and crafted gunnels to lash to the boat's edge, then split thin strips of cedar which they bent over a fire creating ribs to press into the boat. Every seam, hole and lashing was then covered with bear grease/spruce pitch – "indigenous duct tape," as Jarrod calls it.

Once, while canoeing with the fully loaded boat, Robin hit a submerged rock ... hard. We all cringed, but amazingly the bark held up with hardly a scratch, as good as Kevlar! My mindset shifted. Birch bark, in the hand, feels like paper so I guess I expected them to be fragile boats. But the rock did no damage

to the bark, however the black pitch around one of the seams cracked off. At the end of the next portage Jarrod and Robin repaired the seam using some bear grease/spruce pitch they had brought and within ten minutes we were ready to get back on the water good as new. No wonder they were the boat of choice for so many thousands of years!

The second "first" caught me by surprise.

I'm not sure why, but at one point on the trip we all stopped paddling, kind of like a pause in a group conversation when everyone stops talking. We were in perfectly still, glass-like water. Robin was in his birch bark canoe. Nick, Robin's friend and I were in a redwood sea kayak which I designed and built some 20 years ago. Jarrod sat with his paddle on the gunnels of his old wood and canvas 16-footer. All of us sat perfectly still. The silence hit us all at the same moment. There was not a breath of wind. The leaves had already fallen. The migratory birds had long since flown south. Animals were all hunkered down in preparation for the winter. We were the last canoeists of the season. There was no sound. I really mean it. Not one single sound.

I've been around the sun some 52 times now and I honestly cannot recall another time when I consciously experienced complete silence. It was oddly almost deafening and heavy at first. We got lost in it. Our ears were listening with so much intensity but nothing came back. Our minds wanted to hear something, anything, but there was no vibration to receive. It was a spontaneous spell that lasted maybe 20 minutes until eventually one of us shifted and we all began to smile and then quietly began to paddle again.

Here in Milwaukee, we provide first time experiences every day. I am so grateful for the "firsts" I get to witness. I am even more grateful for you. Your support is what makes our mission at the Urban Ecology Center happen. Every day that support provides students, families and adults new experiences in nature. Thank you!

So, what will you try for the first time this year?

*Note: To see a travel log and pictures from this trip, visit Robin's blog at <http://tinyurl.com/birch-bark-canoe>.* 🌿



**Information Session:**  
**Thursday, January 28 at Riverside Park**  
**5:30 - 6:30pm**

## Urban Ecology Center Eco-travel: Sail Maine! May 30-June 5, 2016

What better way to explore the world than by one of the cleanest renewable energy sources we have: wind! Join the Urban Ecology Center for four nights aboard the Lewis R. French, a two-masted schooner built in 1871 that is the oldest continuously operating vessel in the United States! We will island-hop through Penobscot Bay looking for seals, dolphins,

puffins and whales. Participants can help sail the boat, jump in the ocean and partake in a beachside lobster bake. For information contact Tim Vargo, [tvargo@urbanecologycenter.org](mailto:tvargo@urbanecologycenter.org) or come to our Riverside Park branch on Thursday, January 28th at 5:30 for an information session and slide show! 🌿



# NEWSLETTER

This newsletter is a publication of the **Urban Ecology Center**, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Thanks to the generous annual contributions of 215 foundations, corporations and organizations, 3300 members and many in-kind donors the Center provides safe parks and programs for over 300,000 people per year.

To make a contribution, please see below for the easy to use form, visit our website at [www.urbanecologycenter.org](http://www.urbanecologycenter.org) or call the Center at (414) 964-8505.

The **Urban Ecology Center** fosters ecological understanding as inspiration for change, neighborhood by neighborhood. Our Environmental Community Centers:

- Provide outdoor science education for urban youth.
- Protect and use public natural areas, making them safe, accessible and vibrant.
- Preserve and enhance these natural areas and their surrounding waters.
- Promote community by offering resources that support learning, volunteerism, stewardship, recreation, and camaraderie.
- Practice and model environmentally responsible behaviors.

## LOCATIONS & HOURS

### Riverside Park

1500 E. Park Place  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53211  
(414) 964-8505 Fax: (414) 964-1084  
[jferschinger@urbanecologycenter.org](mailto:jferschinger@urbanecologycenter.org)

Hours of operation:  
Monday - Thursday: 9am - 7pm  
Friday & Saturday: 9am - 5pm  
Sunday: Noon - 5pm

### Washington Park

1859 N. 40th St.  
Milwaukee, WI 53208  
(Mailing address: 4145 W. Lisbon Ave., 53208)  
(414) 344-5460 Fax: (414) 344-5462  
[tevens@urbanecologycenter.org](mailto:tevens@urbanecologycenter.org)

Hours of operation:  
Tuesday - Friday: Noon - 6pm  
Saturday: 9am - 5pm

### Menomonee Valley

3700 W. Pierce St.  
Milwaukee, WI 53215  
(414) 431-2940  
[gholstein@urbanecologycenter.org](mailto:gholstein@urbanecologycenter.org)

Hours of operation:  
Tuesday - Friday: Noon - 7pm  
Saturday: 9am - 5pm

[www.UrbanEcologyCenter.org](http://www.UrbanEcologyCenter.org)  
Find us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter!

## BECOME A CONTRIBUTING MEMBER

*By making your gift, you become a contributing member of the Center. Your support provides learning opportunities for thousands of urban youth each year and allows you to enjoy contributing membership benefits at all three of our branches.*

### Choose a Contributing Member Level:

- Student** - benefits one college student . . . . . \$30
- Individual** - member plus one guest . . . . . \$35
- Family** - two adults, and all children or grandchildren under 18 in a household plus one guest. . . . . \$45
- Other** - contributions above \$45 receive family level benefits and can help us:
  - provide a membership for a family in need (\$90)
  - provide a Summer Camp scholarship (\$200)
  - restore urban land with native plants (\$500)
  - Please enter an amount . . . . . \$\_\_\_\_\_

### Give a gift membership:

*Gift memberships are a great way to connect your friends and family to the natural world.*

Recipient Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Occasion \_\_\_\_\_ Deliver by \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Type:  Individual \$35  Family \$45

Send the announcement card to:  Me  Gift Recipient  Card picked up

**Total \$** \_\_\_\_\_

Name  I would like to remain anonymous

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Charge my Card  Check enclosed (payable to **Urban Ecology Center**)

Card Number \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_ 3-digit code \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**Everyone is welcome!** Thanks to generous donors we are able to offer need-based scholarships for memberships. For more information and to apply, please contact our Membership Staff at (414) 964-8505 or drop into one of our Centers and speak with our Visitor Services staff.

My gift is  in honor of or  in memory of \_\_\_\_\_

My employer (list below) has a matching gift program \_\_\_\_\_

I would like information about estate and planned giving

Please return this form to: Urban Ecology Center, 1500 E. Park Place, Milwaukee, WI 53211.

**Did you know you can become a contributing member securely online? Visit [urbanecologycenter.org](http://urbanecologycenter.org) and click "Join."**





FSC logo

## IN THIS ISSUE

### FIRST TIME EVER EXPERIENCES

by Ken Leinbach

*The Urban Ecology Center is a place of "firsts" for many in our community.*

### THE INTERSECTION OF ECOLOGY AND ART

by Beth Heller

*Science and art together can tell the story of an ecosystem ...*

### HIDE AND SEEK

by Jaime Cano

*... we want to create experiences that are talked about and taught from child to child, becoming living memories inside of them all.*

### FREEDOM AND DISCOVERY IN CLASS

by Laurel Cutright

*Every day the educators at the Urban Ecology Center try to model our deep appreciation and sense of stewardship for the students.*

## SEE FOR YOURSELF! (NO REALLY, SEE WHAT'S HAPPENED WITH YOUR SUPPORT)

**THANK YOU**  
for helping make great things  
**POSSUMble**



**You've  
donated over**

**\$99,830**

**to our Fall Fund Drive!** (total as of 12/16/15)