



Beyond Membership – Contributing to Something Great!

by Ken Leinbach, Executive Director

Fifteen years ago a movie cost you on average \$4.50 (now \$8.20), a gallon of gas cost \$1.06 (now \$3.75), a dozen eggs went for \$1.09 (now \$2.50) and an Urban Ecology Center membership cost \$25 (still \$25). What? The crazy thing is that while our membership rates remained the same for 15 years, our offerings increased by at least a factor of ten if not a hundred! 15 years ago we had only one center — a single, double-wide trailer in the then run-down Riverside Park. Our lending program consisted of just a few canoes and our program offerings, while always of the highest quality, represented just a fraction of the number of what we can offer now.

As a member, you are making a statement that you believe in growing natural green spaces in the city, ... that urban kids need a chance to experience nature first hand every day of their lives, and that having a place that inspires sustainable choices in our neighborhoods is ... well ... pretty darn important.

Today you can borrow a whole lot more than just a few canoes, gain access to over 60 programs a month through our bimonthly newsletter and website, get significant discounts on program fees like our fast filling Summer Camps and visit any one of three vibrant community centers each with either brand new or vastly improved natural areas to learn from, work in or explore. So starting on April second the individual membership rate will be \$35, the family membership will be \$45 and the student rate will be \$30.

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~~Earth Day~~ Month!

by Beth Heller, Senior Director of Education and Strategic Planning

For 44 years Earth Day has been celebrated around the world on April 22nd as a day to protect, steward and learn about the earth. It's one of our favorite holidays at the Urban Ecology Center, but we always have too much earth-celebrating enthusiasm for one day. It has caused a bit of a dilemma for us — do we spend the day educating others about our fascinating planet or plan a day of service so you can dig into the dirt? Do we create programs about water or take you out in a canoe to experience it? We want to do it all and one 24-hour day is just not enough. So, we're declaring April to be **Earth Month** at the Urban Ecology Center!

This year we (or rather, you) get to do it all; canoeing, digging in dirt, eating great food and discovering new things about the earth.

With a whole month in mind at our three locations, we needed a plan! For that we turned to our set of 10 environmental issues — established with input from constituents, board and staff — that we use to help guide our activities. Each branch chose one of these issues to feature in their programming. At our Riverside Park branch we're exploring water and how it connects all life. At our Washington Park branch we will be discovering food choices that can be found locally. At our Menomonee Valley branch we will get up and moving as we begin healthy living habits that are good for you and the earth. Here are some details to help you plan your "Earth Month."

Riverside Park theme: Water

Learn basic hydrology in our Naturalist Skills course, reduce your water usage by following a few simple tips from our professional plumbers, then get out on the water and help Milwaukee Riverkeeper Clean-up by Canoe.

Washington Park theme: Food

We love food, especially if we can find it in the park itself. In March we'll

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Branch Highlights

RIVERSIDE PARK

Do you ever wonder if you can simply spend time sitting by our fire or at one of our upstairs tables? The answer is "yes!" We invite you to share our space with us. Bring a good book, picnic, knitting project, laptop, journal, or a friend and relax at the Center in our living room.

WASHINGTON PARK

Another year, another opportunity to help make Washington Park a destination for all of Milwaukee. Volunteer opportunities are available for a wide variety of activities from Citizen Science projects to front desk reception to land stewardship and more (see page 9 for details). Together we can accomplish so much more.

MENOMONEE VALLEY

Three Bridges Park has been named as a finalist for a MANDI Award in the Brewers Community Foundation Public Space category! We are honored to be nominated with Journey House Packers Field and ... our Milwaukee Rotary Centennial Arboretum! It's clear that a lot of great things are happening in our city!



Toddling Into Nature

by Lesley Sheridan, Community Program Coordinator

Reflecting on all my experiences, I've really come to appreciate the pure joy and curiosity preschool-aged children readily exhibit in response to outdoor experiences. I can always count on pockets full of leaves, rocks, sticks and other treasures that kids bring to show me with exclamations of delight! One of my favorite things to do with preschoolers is to flip over these large, black pads that we have in Riverside Park to reveal the invertebrate life hidden beneath. The kids help me point out scurrying centipedes, hustling isopods and wiggling worms. I'll ask if anyone wants to hold one of the worms and a tentative hand will open up. It's not long after that I'll have twelve tiny hands reaching out for a slimy friend of their own.

People who have spent time around kids intuitively know that being outside is good for them. A growing body of research suggests that engaging kids in outdoor play and learning

during their early developmental stages has both immediate and lasting positive effects like healthy brain development, improved attention and cognitive functioning, resilience to stress and adversity, and enhanced curiosity, creativity and imagination. But to fully experience these benefits, young children need regular opportunities to engage in simple, positive, outdoor experiences. With that in mind, we are very excited to provide two new program series — Kindernature and Toddling Into Nature — designed specifically for preschoolers and their parents to experience outdoor and nature-themed play and learning together.

Kindernature programs at Riverside Park are self-directed, drop in programs for preschoolers to engage independently in seasonally-themed activity stations that develop basic learning and motor skills.

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DROPLETS

LEARN MORE ABOUT THESE TOPICS ON OUR WEBSITE

- **Congratulations Judy!** We are proud to announce that our Director of Finance and Operations, Judy Krause has been named one of Milwaukee Business Journal's 40 Under 40. This award takes into account nominee's past accomplishments and their future potential — strong leaders who are making and will continue to make a difference in the community. An invaluable member of our leadership team, Judy has guided the growth and development of the Center and its capital projects. Starting as a part-time business manager with no staff, she has built a strong finance and operations team. We're proud of all of her accomplishments and feel that this award is well deserved.
- **Thank you Sarah!** With gratitude in our hearts we announce that our Environmental Education Program Manager Sarah Rohe will be leaving the Center in March, 2014 to spend more time with her family. Sarah began her career at the Center in 2001 as a Lutheran Volunteer Corps intern. "I had a fish tank on my desk instead of a computer," she said as she reflected on her first days. As the Urban Ecology Center grew, so too did Sarah's abilities and responsibilities. We will miss her strong leadership and ready smile and wish her well as she takes this next step on her path.

- **Wish List.** Visit urbanecologycenter.org/wishlist for an expanded list.

Riverside Park

Ipod - any model/any year
Children's books

Washington Park

8-foot folding tables
Large easel

Menomonee Valley

Headlamps (backpacking style, 4)
Metal colander with handle (8)



Save the Date!

7th Annual Summer Solstice Soiree and Auction June 21, 2014

Join us for a special evening of food, music and fun to benefit the Center's mission. Watch our website for additional information coming soon!

Thank You to Our Donors

Many thanks to the local foundations, corporations and individuals who have donated to the Center. The complete list of donors who have given within the last two months can be found on our website at 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 Gnas, Judy Krause, Jeff McAvoy, Pat Mueller and Demetria Smith.

Contributing writers: Celia Benton, Beth Heller, Ken Leinbach, Emily Michi and Lesley Sheridan.

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

Connecting people with both their community and their environment is at the heart of what we do. One of the ways we accomplish this is through sustainable food programs like these...



40

kids helped plant and maintain the Washington Park Learning Gardens as part of our Food Fridays program



Photo: Mandie Lousier

over

1,000

people met farmers from **17 local farms** at last year's Local Farmer Open House

This year's event is coming up on March 8th!
See page 5 for details.

5,250 square feet

of land was nurtured last year in **35 community garden plots** along the Oak Leaf Trail



60

community garden plots are planned for our Menomonee Valley branch in the summers ahead (piloting 15 in 2014)



If you'd like to support projects like these, consider volunteering or making a donation. Learn how at www.urbanecologycenter.org

Beyond Membership – Contributing to Something Great!

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With such a modest rate increase we are confident that this is still one of the best deals in town. But we know that getting a deal isn't the only, or even the primary, reason that approaching 4000 households have joined the Center. Our members (you) care about our mission, want to support our work and we thank you for this.

Because of this "join the cause" concept that so many have been telling us is the motivation to join us, we refer to members as "contributing members." Most members contribute well beyond our basic rates (again we thank you). They know that all funds provided contribute to the good work we collectively are doing through our staff and the ever growing ranks of volunteers (over 4000 recorded last year!).

As a member you are making a statement that you believe in growing natural green spaces in the city, that protecting our water by naturalizing our shorelines is essential, that urban kids need a chance to experience nature first hand every day of their lives, and that having a place that inspires sustainable choices in our neighborhoods is ... well ... pretty darn important.

You are a member of something amazingly unique, something many cities across the country and even the world would like to have.

This is something that sets Milwaukee apart. Something that we collectively created and can take great pride in. How many memberships give you that?

I remember 15 years ago when we raised our rates from \$7 a member to \$25 we all held our breath, wondering if people would still join.

In short order we could breathe easy. Not only did we hardly lose a single member, it was then that our growth curve really took off. Our membership number grew, our waiting list for schools grew and our need for a facility became clear. In 2001 we announced our first building campaign to our approximately 400 members (this seemed like such a big number back then!). In 2004 we opened our doors and membership doubled almost overnight! Fast forward to today with three vibrant centers spread throughout the city and a still growing membership measured in the thousands. Wow!

We are proud of these changes and hope you will be too. We are not holding our breath

this time around because this time we are confident in our offerings and our delivery.

Our new rate structure sets our value more honestly in the community. Members of the Center get a deal, you know it and we know it. But lets not keep it a secret. Four thousand member households is still only a small fraction of the 1.5 million people within our metropolitan region. Perhaps you can help? Please take a moment in your busy day and think of someone you know that should be, or could benefit from being, a part of this community and give them a nudge to join. The more members we have the more good work we can do so help us spread the word! If every current member could bring in just one additional person to join this vibrant community ... well ... think of how much more we can accomplish!

Note: We are not changing our scholarship policy. 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. Please share this with people you know that might have this need. 🌱

Earth Day Month!

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be tapping trees and boiling the sap down to syrup. Taste the fresh maple syrup, created from our own trees at our Pancake Breakfast. Families with toddlers will learn how to grow their own gardens at our Fun with Food program.

Menomonee Valley theme: Healthy Living
Get up and get out! One of the essential parts of a healthy lifestyle is activity. Get moving with our Zumba and Martial Arts classes. You could come for a walk then stay to "Dig it, Plant it, Grow it" with our land stewardship team.

Our Earth Month culminates with a city-wide, all-hands Earth Day of Service! Our Earth Day service opportunities are a kick-off to warm season volunteering because, as Volunteer Program Manager Meghan Jones says, "One day just isn't enough to capture all the energy and interest Milwaukeeans have in getting outside and making a difference."

Join us on April 26th as hundreds of grandparents, parents, children, aunts, uncles,

friends and neighbors come together to make a difference in our urban natural areas.

While many of our volunteers help with outdoor physical activities, they also provide advice, serve as a resource for visitors, support administrative efforts and more.

We invite you to share your time, talents and advice with us, for not just Earth Day but rather Earth Month and beyond. Come join us! 🌱

MARCH & APRIL

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

April 2014 is EARTH MONTH!

Earth Day is April 22nd, but we are celebrating our planet all month long!

Join us for programs based on the chosen theme at each of our three branches and for our new *Earth Day of Service* event.

EARTH DAY of SERVICE!

Come celebrate the Earth by giving back! Join us from 9am - noon for a morning of volunteer activities in our park, followed by a community lunch from noon - 1:30pm.

Saturday, April 26th | 9AM - 1:30PM
at All Three Branches

Riverside Park
THEME: *Water*

Reduce Your Use (And Your Water Bill) - Sat., Apr. 5
Naturalist Skills: Basic Hydrology - Sun., Apr. 6
Tour of Jones Island Wastewater Treatment Plant - Sat., Apr. 12
River Clean-up by Canoe Co-sponsored by Milwaukee Riverkeeper - Sat., Apr. 26
River Explorers at Hubbard Park - Sun., Apr. 27

Washington Park
THEME: *Food*

Food Fridays - Every Fri.
Pancake Breakfast - Sat., Apr. 5
Build a Self Watering Planter - Sat., Apr. 12
Fun With Food - Sat., Apr. 19

Menomonee Valley
THEME: *Healthy Living*

The Zumba Experience! - Every 2nd & 4th Wed. of month
Martial Arts with Above the Clouds - Every Wed.
Menomonee Valley Walking Tour - Wed. Apr. 2
Dig it, Plant it, Grow it - Every Mon.

Find details about these programs on the following pages »



12th 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.

(RP) Saturday, March 8 | 11AM - 3PM | Free!

RIVERSIDE PARK



April is Earth Month! Throughout the month you can learn all about **Water** at the Riverside Park branch. Learn tips to reduce your water bill, tour Jones

Island, explore basic hydrology, sample macro invertebrates in the Milwaukee River with your family and more! Then get your hands dirty at the **Earth Day of Service!**

— *Jamie Ferschinger,*
Branch Manager - Riverside Park

WASHINGTON PARK



Maple syrup is so much better when you make it yourself. Each Saturday in March here at Washington Park you can **help us collect maple sap** and boil it

down into syrup. Learn how to work our new wood-fired evaporator which boils down the sap to perfection. Then sample the best Washington Park syrup ever made at our annual Pancake Breakfast on April 5th. The breakfast is the kick-off to our **Earth Month of "Good Food."** Explore healthy food with us.

— *Willie Karidis,*
Branch Manager - Washington Park

MENOMONEE VALLEY



Come celebrate Earth Month at Menomonee Valley! Our theme is "Healthy Living" and we've got all sorts of fun ways to get yourself healthy and help keep our land healthy, too. Join us for the **The Zumba Experience**, an **Introduction to Fly Fishing**, a **Martial Arts** class with Above the Clouds, and of course, our **Earth Day of Service!** Or come get some exercise while helping out our new volunteer stewardship opportunity **Dig It, Plant It, Grow It!**

— *Glenna Holstein,*
Branch Manager - Menomonee Valley

Quick Guide

Toddling Into Nature

Wildlife in Your Backyard

Discover urban wildlife through outdoor and indoor play, stories and activities. Dress for the weather. Register by March 24th.

(RP) Thu., Mar. 27 | 10 - 11:30am

For families with children ages 3-5 | \$5/person (Nonmembers: \$7/person)

Fun With Food

Join us as we learn about the different types of food people and animals eat and some of the basics of growing your own food. Please register by April 12.

(WP) Sat., Apr. 19 | 10 - 11:30am

For families with children ages 3-5 | \$5/person (Nonmembers: \$7/person)

27th Annual Earth Poets & Musicians Celebration: Earthstravaganza - 20 Performers in 2 Hours!

Join us as the Earth Poets & Musicians host this special event to benefit the Urban Ecology Center. Twenty poets, activists, performing artists and musicians join in this eclectic, inspiring celebration of our living planet.

(RP) Fri., Apr. 25 | 8 - 10pm
For everyone | \$5 suggested donation

Food Fridays

Join us as we plant and maintain our Learning Gardens. We'll cook and enjoy tasty meals with the harvest!

(WP) Every Fri. | 4 - 6pm
For kids 7-12 | Free - donations appreciated (Nonmembers: \$5 suggested donation)

From Sap to Syrup!

Maple Sugaring Program at Riverside Park

Follow the flow from sap to syrup as we learn the maple sugaring process. We'll be both indoors and outdoors and sample maple syrup with homemade pancakes.

(RP) Sats., Mar. 15, 22, 29

& Apr. 5 | 10am - noon

For families and children | Adults: \$10 (Nonmembers: \$12) Children: \$8 (Nonmembers: \$10)

Maple Sugaring Basics at Washington Park

Participate in the classic Wisconsin winter activity of collecting maple sap and boiling it down into syrup. Samples are included! Dress to be outside.

(WP) Sats., Mar. 1, 8, 15, 22 & 29 | 10 - 11:30am

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

Pancake Breakfast

Come join us for a pancake breakfast to celebrate the coming of spring. Pancakes will be served with 100% maple syrup made from trees in Washington Park. Fruit, coffee and juice will also be provided.

(WP) Sat., Apr. 5 | 10 - 11:30am

For everyone | Adults: \$6 (Nonmembers: \$9) Children: \$4 (Nonmembers: \$7)

Junior Astronomers Club

Learn about the night sky, urban stargaze and do fun crafts for all ages. Telescopes are available.

(MV) Tue., Mar. 11 | 7 - 8:30pm
For everyone | Free - donations appreciated

Searching for Spring

The long winter is over and things are waking up! Help us search for signs of spring's return. Dress for the weather.

(WP) Sat., Mar. 15 | 10 - 11:30am

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

Stretching with Story Books!

Take a book, add yoga-based movements and you have a recipe for family fun! Led by yoga instructor Stephanie Sandy. Registration required.

(MV) Sat., Mar. 15 | 10:30 - 11:15am

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

Spring Break at the Urban Ecology Center

Come play and explore with us! Spend three active mornings learning about water, food and healthy living. Registration is required by April 7th.

(RP) Mon., Apr. 14, Tue., Apr. 15

& Wed., Apr. 16 | 9am - noon
For kids in grades 1-5 | \$35 (Nonmembers: \$40)

River Explorers at Hubbard Park

Join one of the Center's educators as we wade in the Milwaukee River to explore the macro-invertebrate life hidden there. Hip waders provided. Meet at Hubbard Park.

(RP) Sun., Apr. 27 | 2 - 3:30pm
For everyone | \$5 (Nonmembers: \$10)

Science Saturdays and Sundays

Discover "Wonderful Water!" through self-led interactive activities and crafts.

(RP) Drop in program
Every Sat. | 10am - 4pm
Every Sun. | 1 - 4pm
For everyone | Free

Animal Feeding

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

Young Scientists Club

From hiking to gardening, every day is a new adventure.

(RP) Every Mon. | 4 - 5:30pm
For ages 5 through 12 | \$10 annual fee (Plus suggested daily donation - \$5)

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

(MV) Every Tue. & Thu. | 4 - 6pm
and Every Sat. | 1 - 4pm
For ages 5-12 | \$10 annual membership

HOMESCHOOL SERIES

Homeschool Series: Scientific Inquiry

From chemistry to botany to physics, scientists observe and experiment to discover how the world works. What discoveries will you make?

(RP) March 11, **(WP)** March 25, **(MV)** April 8 & **(RP)** April 22 | 1 - 3pm
For children age 5 and older | \$7 (Non-member: \$10)



Some programs fill quickly!
Register today to save your spot!

Find full descriptions and details about these programs on our website
www.urbanecologycenter.org/calendar

3 WAYS TO REGISTER:

1 ONLINE:
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. 40th St.

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



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

Quick Guide

EcoTravel: Alaska!

The Great Alaska Adventure 2014! ♿

Ever wanted to go to Alaska? Here's your chance to learn about our 49th state, the ins and outs of traveling there and sign up for the Center's trip to Denali National Park on September 4-13, 2014. Join Washington Park's Willie Karidis for a slide show of last year's trip and all the spots we will be visiting. Willie lived on the border of Denali Park for many years and looks forward to sharing his love of this truly wild state with all of you. Registration is on a first come, first serve basis.

(RP) Tue. Mar 4 or
Wed., Mar. 19 | 7pm
For adults, teens and families |
Free - donations appreciated

From Consumption to Conservation ♿

Join Scott Russell Sanders, author of *A Conservationist Manifesto*. Book signing to follow.

Mon., Mar. 3 | 7 - 8:30pm
For adults | \$5 (Nonmembers: \$10)

The Meaning of Life Based on the Letter "P" ♿

Urban Ecology Center Executive Director Ken Leinbach will share how his connection to the natural world has had a profound influence on his spiritual thinking and practice.

(WP) Tue., Mar. 11 | 7 - 8:30pm
For adults | \$5 (Nonmembers: \$10)

Walk With a Doc

Join community doctors and nurses for a relaxed and safe one-mile walk. Walk with a Doc is a great way of making strides toward a healthier lifestyle.

(WP) Sats., Mar. 1 &
Apr. 5 | 10 - 11am
For adults, teens and accompanied children | Free - donations appreciated

Sustainable Coffee Tasting ♿

Join coffee experts from the MKE Coffee Guild and taste locally roasted coffee from around the world.

(RP) Sats., Mar. 15 &
Apr. 12 | 10 - 11am
For adults | \$8 (Nonmember: \$10)

Your Favorite Baked Goods are Going Gluten-Free ♿

Learn how to make recipes gluten-free in this baking demonstration! Sign up early and send your favorite recipe to Pastry Chef Annie Wegner LeFort who will personally convert it.

(RP) Mon., Mar. 17 | 7 - 8pm
For adults and teens | \$15
(Nonmembers: \$20)

Data Workshop ♿

Interested in the research data we collect? Join this workshop get involved in our data analysis.

(RP) Mon., Mar. 24 | 6 - 7pm
For adults | Free - donations appreciated

Let's Make Paneer - Indian Cheese ♿

Learn how to make homemade paneer in this hands-on class with Indian cuisine Chef Susan Pack. Registration required by March 21.

(RP) Tue., Mar. 25 | 6 - 8:30pm
For adults | \$30 (Nonmembers: \$40)

From Beak to Tail:

All About the Life of Birds ♿

Join us for an in-depth look into bird ecology, conservation and behavior followed by a dusk walk.

(WP) Tue., Mar. 25 | 5 - 6:30pm
(RP) Thu., Apr. 10 | 5 - 6:30pm
For adults | \$5 (Nonmembers: \$10)

Wheelhouse to Greenway Gateway

Co-sponsored by the River Revitalization Foundation

Learn about the Greenway Gateway project and the Milwaukee Estuary Area of Concern, then join us in a restoration activity. Registration required by March 26th.

(RP) Sat., Mar. 29 | 9am - noon
For adults and teens | Free - donations appreciated

Photo Phenology ♿

Get out your camera or sketch pad and watch the Valley change over the seasons and through the years!

(MV) Sat., Mar. 29 | 10 - 11:30am
For adults, teens and families |
Free - donations appreciated

Menomonee Valley Walking Tours ♿

(MV) Every 1st Wed. | 10 - 11am
For adults | Free - donations appreciated

Fruit Tree Grafting Workshop ♿

Learn how to graft and take home two semi-dwarf apple, pear or plum trees. Root stocks and scion wood provided. Additional materials available for a fee. Bring a sharp knife, otherwise there will be some available. Registration required by March 30.

(RP) Sat., Apr. 5 | Noon - 2pm
For adults | \$18 (Nonmembers: \$20)

Scion Wood Exchange ♿

Join fellow fruit tree enthusiasts as we swap stories and trade scion wood from various trees.

(RP) Sat., Apr. 5 | 2 - 4pm
For adults and teens | Free - donations appreciated

Reduce Your Use (And Your Water Bill) ♿

In partnership with Milwaukee Plumbing and Piping and H2Oscore

Learn how to reduce your water bill and environmental footprint. Leave with a quick way to fix the largest source of leaks in the home and an app that tracks your water use.

(RP) Sat., Apr. 5 | 9:30 - 10:45am
For adults | Free - donations appreciated

Naturalist Skills: Basic Hydrology ♿

Immerse yourself in the world of water. Registration required by April 4th.

(RP) Sun., Apr. 6 | 2:30 - 4pm
For adults | \$10 (Docent and NEEP volunteers: \$5) (Nonmembers: \$15)

Herptile Response to Habitat Restoration Along the Milwaukee River ♿

Learn how our study of herptiles can be applied to conserving snakes, frogs and turtles. Speaker: Julia Robson, Assistant Natural Areas Coordinator, Milwaukee County Parks.

(MV) Tue., Apr. 8 | 7 - 8:30pm
For adults | \$5 (Nonmembers: \$10)

Tour of Jones Island Wastewater Treatment Plant

Get a behind the scenes tour of our used water treatment process. Wear flat, closed-toed shoes and long pants. Registration required by April 11th.

(RP) Sat., Apr. 12 | 9:30am - 12:30pm
For adults and children over 10 years old | \$7 (Nonmembers: \$10)

Build a Self Watering Planter ♿

Learn how to create a balanced, low maintenance planter for your garden! Bring a container of your choice.

(WP) Sat., Apr. 12 | 10 - 11:30am
For adults and accompanied children
Adults: \$6 (Nonmembers: \$9);
Children: \$4 (Nonmembers: \$6)

Veggie Burgers From Scratch ♿

Watch this demonstration on how to create your own burgers using veggies, legumes and nuts. Chef Annie Wegner LeFort will share tips for flavor pairing, prep, cooking and freezing.

(RP) Mon., Apr. 21 | 7 - 8pm
For adults and teens | \$15
(Nonmember: \$20)

Screening: Ordinary Extraordinary Junco

Join us for a screening of *Ordinary Extraordinary Junco*, a film by Indiana University, the National Science Foundation and the Center for Integrative Study of Animal Behavior.

(MV) Thu., Apr. 24 | 6 - 8pm
For adults and teens | \$5
(Nonmembers: \$10)

Light Indian Meal - Cooking Class ♿

In this hands on class, Chef Susan Pack will teach how to make a light Indian meal. Registration required by April 18.

(RP) Thu., Apr. 24 | 6 - 8:30pm
For adults | \$30 (Nonmembers: \$40)

In a New Light: Teens Finding Hope Through Nature Photography ♿

Co-sponsored by the Lake Michigan Stakeholder Group

Ben Thwaits from Northwest Passage, a nonprofit residential mental health treatment facility for teens will share the story of their teen photography project, "In a New Light," and on the restorative power of nature.

(MV) Wed., Apr. 30 | Noon - 1pm
For adults and teens | Free - donations appreciated

The Zumba Experience!

Zumba classes with instructor Gema Diaz feature high-energy Latin and international beats. Before you know it, your energy levels will soar!

(MV) Every 2nd & 4th Wed. of the month | 5:30 - 6:30pm
For adults | Free - donations appreciated

Quick Guide

Snowshoeing Through History

Drop by any time for guided snowshoe hikes through Three Bridges Park. Members of the Native American Awareness Project will also be on hand to share stories, demonstrations and traditional foods. If weather conditions are not suitable for snowshoeing, we'll still lead walking hikes.

(MV) Sat., Mar. 1 | 1 - 4pm
For everyone | Free - donations appreciated

An Introduction to Fly Fishing

Join this course offered by Southeast Wisconsin Trout Unlimited and learn how to get started in the sport of fly fishing. Attend one class or the full course. A raffle for a fly rod and fly tying kit will be held for those who attended six or more classes. Equipment provided. Topics are:

Mar. 8: Introduction
Mar. 15: Fly Casting Lessons
Mar. 22: Fly Tying and Insects we Imitate – The Woolly Bugger
Mar. 29: Fly Tying and Insects we Imitate – Nymphs and Soft Hackles
Apr. 5: Fly Tying – The Gurgler and Top Water Patterns
Apr. 12: Kid's Fishing Day at Area Parks. Children will flyfish at a local stocked pond and adults will have an advanced fly tying class
Apr. 19: Entomology and Ecology, Casting, Stream Tactics
April 26: Earth Day of Service: Clean up the Menomonee River, high attendance raffle for fly rod and reel and fly tying kits.

(MV) Every Sat. | 10 - 11:30am
For adults and children aged 10 and up | Free - donations appreciated

Open Climb

The warmer weather is back and so is Open Climb! Stop in after work or school and enjoy climbing our three story rock wall. All equipment is provided and trained belayers are on hand to assist.

(RP) Every Sun. starting
Apr. 6 | 2 - 4pm
For adults, teens, and families | Adults: \$10 (Nonmembers: \$12) Children: \$8 (Nonmembers: \$10) Punch cards available for in-person purchase.

Water Safety Course

Interested in borrowing our canoes or kayaks this spring or summer? Come take a 30-minute, on land, water safety course to make sure that you are ready to get out on the water safely. This training, or training through one of our scheduled canoe/kayak trips, is a requirement of Urban Ecology Center's canoe/kayak lending membership benefit.

(RP) Mon., Apr. 28 | 6 - 6:30pm
For adults | Free - donations appreciated

Martial Arts with Above the Clouds

Hosted by Above the Clouds, this class teaches kids and teens respect, discipline, physical awareness, integrity and self-confidence. No experience needed! For more information, visit www.abovethecloudsmilwaukee.com. Register on their website or at the door.

(MV) Every Wed. | 5 - 6pm
For youth ages 9-15 | Free - donations appreciated

INTEREST GROUPS

Photo Club

(RP) Thus., Mar. 6 &
Apr. 3 | 6:30 - 9pm

Friends of Real Food: Potluck Dinner and Program

(RP) Weds., Mar. 12 &
Apr. 9 | 6 - 8pm

Urban Echo Poets

(RP) Thus., Mar. 13 &
Apr. 10 | 7 - 8:30pm

Faith and Ecology

(RP) Tues., Mar. 18 &
Apr. 15 | 7 - 8:30pm

Urban Stargazers

(RP) Thus., Mar. 13 &
Apr. 10 | 7 - 8:30pm

Transition Milwaukee: All City Hub Meeting

(RP) Mons., Mar. 24 &
Apr. 22 | 6:30 - 8:30pm

Early Morning Birdwalks

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

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Volunteer Orientation

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

(RP) Fri., Mar. 7 | 3 - 4:30pm
(RP) Sat., Mar. 15 | 10:30am - noon
(RP) Thu., Mar. 27 | 5:30 - 7pm
(RP) Sat., Apr. 5 | 10:30am - noon
(RP) Fri., Apr. 18 | 3 - 4:30pm
(RP) Tue., Apr. 29 | 5:30 - 7pm

(WP) Fri., Mar. 14 | 4:30 - 5:30pm
(WP) Sat., Mar. 29 | 10:30 - 11:30am
(WP) Fri., Apr. 11 | 4:30 - 5:30pm
(WP) Thu., Apr. 24 | 5 - 6pm

(MV) Tue., Mar. 4 | 5:30 - 7pm
(MV) Thu., Mar. 13 | 5:30 - 7pm
(MV) Thu., Apr. 10 | 5:30 - 7pm
(MV) Sat., Apr. 19 | 10:30am - noon

For adults and teens | Free - donations appreciated

New! Dig It, Plant It, Grow It!

Come help weed, maintain and water the community garden area of Three Bridges Park.

(MV) Every Mon. | 9 - 11am
For adults and teens | Free - donations appreciated

River Clean-up by Canoe

Co-sponsored by Milwaukee Riverkeeper
Canoe, clean and learn about river improvement projects at Lincoln Park. Meet at the boat launch on the Milwaukee River Parkway in Lincoln Park. Register by April 25th.

(RP) Sat., Apr. 26 | 9am - noon
For adults, teens, and families | Free - donations appreciated

Spring Bird Banding Workshop

Learn how you can join our bird banding program. Dress for the weather. Please contact Jennifer Callaghan at jcallaghan@urbanecologycenter.org to register.

(RP) Tue., Apr. 8 | 8 - 11am
For adults | Free - donations appreciated

Bird Banding

Join our bird banding program. Banding is dependent on specific weather conditions, so please contact Jennifer Callaghan at jcallaghan@urbanecologycenter.org before attending.

(RP) Tue., Apr. 15 | 5:30am - 12:30pm
(WP) Tue., Apr. 22 | 5:30am - 12:30pm
(MV) Tue., Apr. 29 | 5:15am - 12:30pm
For adults and accompanied children | Free - donations appreciated

Volunteer Belayer Training

Attend our volunteer belayer training and help our participants and students enjoy the experience of climbing.

(RP) Tue., Apr. 29 | 5 - 8pm
For adults and teens | Free - donations appreciated

Weekly volunteer opportunities

Find these weekly events on our website

Burdock Brigades	Volunteer Papermaking
Compost Crew	Volunteer Park Rangers
Forestry Fridays	
Work Outside Wednesdays	

ART AT THE CENTER

Water and Light — Closing Reception

Join us for the closing reception of *Water and Light*. Become mesmerized again by Kurt Kleman's acrylic paintings, Thea Kovac's watercolors and Tom Petri's bird carvings.

(RP) Thu., Mar. 20 | 5 - 7pm
For everyone | Free - donations appreciated

Visual Reflections: Printmaker Collective — Art Opening

Twelve fine art printmakers were linked with twelve ecologists, to engage in a conversation. This exhibit, organized by Bench Press Events for the World Conference of the Society for Ecological Restoration, is a visual representation of each ecologist's story. Artists speak at 6pm.

(RP) Thu., Apr. 10 | 5 - 7pm
For everyone | Free



Woodlands, Fruit Orchards and Prairies Oh My!

by Emily Michi, Volunteer Coordinator

When I was first hired as an Environmental Educator seven years ago the Washington Park branch was just getting started. I had spent the last four years teaching in a variety of environmental education centers where my outdoor classroom had been a forest.

My new outdoor classroom was not a forest but a city park that had a lagoon with a very distinct “stinky end,” some nicely spaced trees and grass. All I could see were the challenges in not having decomposing logs to roll over, undergrowth to play camouflage or a gully of rocks; in short, all the things I was used to having when teaching a class.

So I wondered exactly how I would make Washington Park magical and exciting to a group of students. I quickly learned that

hikes through Washington Park were magical and exciting, especially if you looked at it through the eyes of the students.

But what has been more exciting is how Washington Park as an outdoor classroom has changed over the last seven years. Raised bed gardens were built on the sparse grass between the building and the pond, a fishing pier was built on the island, the lagoon’s shoreline was restored with riparian habitat, rain gardens were planted, a prairie was established, native wetland plants were planted in the old lily ponds, a fruit orchard with a variety of trees has been planted and lately our land stewards have been creating a woodland. There is still a distinct “stinky end” of the lagoon that one day I hope will be a little less aromatic but my outdoor classroom sure does look different.

All of this has taken a lot of hard work by our great team of land stewards and by our dedicated volunteers. What has been done is incredible, but as we move forward there is still more work to do.

During the spring, summer and fall, volunteers help our land stewards plant native vegetation, remove invasive species, water the new plants and more. We would love your help in Washington Park to continue its growth. One way to get involved is to join our Burdock Brigade every Thursday from 3 - 5pm. To learn other ways you can help make Washington Park the crown jewel of the Milwaukee County Park system, come to one of our Volunteer Orientations (see our Quick Guide for dates), or contact me at emichi@urbanecologycenter.org. 🌿



How One Program Changed My Life

by Mieko, High School Outdoor Leader


Below is an excerpt from a blog written by one of our current participants in our High School Outdoor Leaders program.

I came into the Outdoor Leaders program an extremely anxious person. Having come from a small school in a small suburb, I was used to feeling out of place because I was different, and I put a lot of time and energy into trying to conceal that fact. I always felt that my mixed race prevented me from fitting in and my nerdiness made me “weird” in the eyes of my classmates, so I became a strict perfectionist, determined that no one would find anything wrong with me or the work I did. The Outdoor Leaders program, though it sounded like a fun opportunity, made me even more nervous because it meant meeting new people (my seventeen other coworkers) and I was sure that they too would find some fault with me. I braced myself for a long two years being once again on the outskirts of the group. The first day I met the other Outdoor Leaders, I realized that I couldn’t have been more wrong. When I

entered the room and sat down, the first thing that hit me was the amount of diversity at the table. I came from a primarily white school, but here were kids from all different backgrounds and who lived all over Milwaukee. While we each had our own interests and passions, we shared an important similarity — we all were excited to be there and impatient to begin working. Their unquestioning acceptance of me calmed me down, and we excitedly began our summer at the Urban Ecology Center.

After our first year of work, I was thrilled to go to Wyoming to see the Teton Science School and Yellowstone National Park. Touching down in Jackson Hole, I knew we were in for something great ...

To read the whole post please visit urbanecologycenter.org/miekosstory. We are accepting applications for our 2014-2016 High School Outdoor Leader program. If you know a teen in grades 9 or 10 who would be a good fit for our 2-year program, please have them visit urbanecologycenter.org/outdoorleaders.



**SATURDAY
MAY
24
2014**

AT THE
**URBAN
ECOLOGY CENTER**

**TEEN
SURVIVAL
CHALLENGE**

*Will you
accept the
challenge?*

**Join us for a
SURVIVAL CHALLENGE**

- × **hiking**
- × **fire building**
- × **orienteeing**
- × **team building**
- × **puzzle solving**
- × **and more!**

for teens | **led by teens**



The “Heartbeat” of a Community

by Celia Benton, Environmental Educator

It was another sunny day in the Menomonee Valley. Delma placed the stethoscope against a gnarly tree branch in Three Bridges Park. Her eyes grew wide and she shouted “I can hear it! The tree has a pulse!”

Several minutes, and several tree pulses later, Delma approached me and said, “My grandfather in Mexico used to place his ear to the ground and say he could hear the heartbeat of the earth. Is it true that the earth has a heartbeat? Now that I’ve heard the pulses of the trees I think he is right.” It was one of the most profound and beautiful statements I have ever heard, and it came from a seventh grader.

From what I saw, Delma was similar in many ways to other seventh graders — within minutes of her statement she was off joking, laughing and being a little mischievous with her friends — but her comment deeply resonated with me. Even though I have not seen her in months, I still enjoy telling this story.

Delma is one of the hundreds of students learning in the Valley every weekday. Through NEEP (our Neighborhood Environmental

Education Program), students are picking up trash, planting native species, testing water quality, cross-country skiing on the Hank Aaron State Trail or simply playing games in the prairie. While each activity connects students to life in the Valley a little differently, it’s all a lot of fun.

I am fascinated with how many connections are made in the Menomonee Valley every day. Everything — people of all ages using the new Three Bridges Park, wonderful-smelling grey headed coneflower seeds, hawks, field mice, snakes and more — combines together to make the Valley what it is today, a place full of life, love and wonder.

At the Urban Ecology Center we frequently discuss how to support and become part of, our local communities. Everyone has a different story about what we do here at the Center, and I think Delma’s story sums it up well: we help build community by connecting people to life in their local environment. In Delma’s case, this connection also brought her closer to her family and perhaps gave her a little more respect and awe for our planet Earth. 🌱



2014
Summer Camp
registration
is **open**
sign up today!

urbanecologycenter.org/summercamp



FOURTH ANNUAL
**GREEN BIRDING
CHALLENGE**

MAY 10, 2014

Get a team of beginners or experienced birdwatchers and join this fun event to benefit our Research and Citizen Science programs. **Watch our website for details!**

Toddling Into Nature

continued from page 2

During the Toddling Into Nature Series at Riverside and Washington Parks, an Urban Ecology Center educator will guide young children to explore the wonders of our urban parks. We will facilitate activities that allow young children and adults to interact meaningfully with each other and with nature, as well as with the other families.

Activities in these programs provide preschoolers with opportunities to engage all five senses and stimulate curiosity through

guided exploration, practice motor and cognitive skills with hands-on learning and build a foundation of appreciation for the natural world. Our programs are designed to help adults learn motivating methods and ideas for involving preschoolers in meaningful encounters with nature.

Get your little one involved in guided nature play. Check our online calendar and newsletter for the Kindernature and Toddling Into Nature schedule. 🌱



THE GREAT
ALASKA ADVENTURE

SEPTEMBER 4-13, 2014

Sign up begins March 4

For more information see page 7 or email [Willie, wkaridis@urbanecologycenter.org](mailto:willie_wkaridis@urbanecologycenter.org)

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, almost 4000 member households and many in-kind donors the Center serves over 80,000 people per year.

To make a contribution, please see page 14 for the easy to use form, visit our website at 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

All Center locations have special hours during the holidays. See the Program & Events Quick Guide for details.

Riverside Park

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

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

Menomonee Valley

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

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

www.UrbanEcologyCenter.org
Find us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter!

JOIN OUR COMMUNITY TODAY!

MEMBERSHIP

Did you know you can join or renew your membership securely online? Visit urbanecologycenter.org and click "membership."

The rates below reflect our first increase since 1998 and begin April 2, 2014. See page 1 for details.

Renew or begin your membership today, choose one:

Family (\$45) Individual (\$35) includes guest Student (\$30)

Financial assistance is available. Please call the Center at (414) 964-8505 and ask to speak to someone on our membership team for details.

Give a gift membership:

Family (\$45) Individual (\$35) includes guest Student (\$30)

Recipient Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Day Phone _____ Eve. _____

Email _____

Send the announcement card to Me Gift recipient
Occasion _____ Deliver by _____

Total _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State/Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

My neighborhood park is

Riverside Washington Menomonee I love them all!

I would like to volunteer. Please contact me.

Charge my membership to: Master Card Visa

Card Number _____ - _____ - _____ - _____

Expiration Date _____ / _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Please make your check payable to:
Urban Ecology Center and return it
with this form to:

Riverside Park, 1500 E. Park Place
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53211
www.UrbanEcologyCenter.org

Earth Day is April 22nd, but we are celebrating our planet all month long!

April 2014 is
EARTH MONTH!

Join us for programs based on the chosen theme at each of our three branches:

Riverside Park THEME: <i>Water</i>	Washington Park THEME: <i>Food</i>	Menomonee Valley THEME: <i>Healthy Living</i>
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Find details in the programs section »

FSC logo

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



40

kids helped plant and maintain our Washington Park Learning Gardens as a part of the Food Fridays program.