

VOLUME 22, NUMBER 3 | MAY & JUNE 2013



Impact of Urban Nature

by Ken Leinbach, Executive Director and Beth Heller, Senior Director of Education and Strategic Planning



When we started this project we now affectionately call the Urban Ecology Center, we had a dream, a concept for implementation and a process to get us there. Our expectations for success have been significantly exceeded never in our wildest dreams did we expect to have three vibrant environmental community centers up and running so soon from our beginnings in a trailer parked in Riverside Park.



But are we really having the impacts we set out to accomplish? Are students really learning? Are our parks, that we claim are now safe, really being used? Is providing nature in the city and exposing people to it really making a difference? And how do we actually know?

We love questions like this! And now we finally have a robust platform with data sets rigorous enough to begin (and it is just a beginning) to answer some of these questions. It is so darn exciting to be able to provide a taste of some of our early findings about park use.

Thanks to several research partnerships, the Urban Ecology Center is now collecting data to help us understand the impact of our work to make parks safe, accessible and ecologically vibrant for people living near the parks.

Under the guidance of our Citizen Science research team, John Schneider, a student in the UWM Geography Department, developed

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World Wide Jam

by Tim Vargo, Manager of Research and Citizen Science

What do the late Senator Gaylord Nelson, polar explorer Eric Larsen, South African conservationist Louis Liebenberg, poet Wendell Berry, Carl Leopold (late son of Aldo) and the Urban Ecology Center's Beth Heller all have in common? They have all donated their time and talents as speakers at the Urban Ecology Center. However, there is another common bond, a rather tasty one, that emerges if we dig a little into the Urban Ecology Center's past.

About 15 years ago, Edie and Gil Walter, neighbors and supporters of the Riverside Urban Environmental Center (which was about to be re-named the Urban Ecology Center) attended a program in the trailer. At the end of the lecture, the recently hired Executive Director, Ken Leinbach, was candid with the audience and the speaker. "Well, we don't really have any money," said Leinbach, "but some friends of mine back in Michigan make some really good homemade jelly with which we can pay you for your talk."

A few minutes later Edie approached Ken and said "You know Ken, I also make some pretty good homemade jams and jellies from fruit in our backyard and local parks. Let me know if you'd like a supply for future speakers." And thus a tradition was born.

It's hard to say exactly how many jars of Edie and Gil's jellies have been given to visiting speakers over the years, but an educated estimate puts the number at well over 150. They've been packed in luggage by visiting speakers and taken to 16 states and at least 3 countries.

What kind of tastiness are we giving these speakers? Edie makes jams, jellies and syrups with Sure Jell (powder and liquid) using a method she learned from her mother growing up in the Wisconsin countryside. She picks elderberries, currants, rhubarb and chokecherries from her backyard and also heads to local parks to find wild grapes, chokeberries

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Branch Highlights



RIVERSIDE PARK

Starting in May, Artist in Residence Yevgeniya Kaganovich will begin creating a unique year-long art installment called grow. Made of recycled plastic bags, grow is an evolving art installation. Help her create it by contributing plastic bags or stop by often and watch it grow!



WASHINGTON PARK

Come pedal in the park! Our branch now has bikes in its collection of equipment lending items. Washington Park has wonderful, winding trails for you to explore. If you are a member and want to borrow a bike, contact us and reserve one todav!



MENOMONEE VALLEY

We're thrilled that the Menomonee Valley's Equipment Lending program is now in full swing. Stop by to borrow a bike or kayak and head outside to enjoy the outdoors in our newest neighborhood! Can't you hear the river and Hank Aaron State Trail calling?



Citizen Science Spring Workshops

The Center's program is really hopping (and swimming and wriggling and flying)! We are monitoring everything from mammals to frogs to moths. We need you! If you are interested in becoming a citizen scientist and helping us collect data in the park or analyze that data, please attend one of the monitoring workshops listed below. All of the workshops are free and are held at our Riverside Park branch.

Citizen-based Aesthetics Monitoring Training

Help look for items (trash, odd colored water, strange odors) that detract from the beauty and usability of our rivers. This program is supported by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Great Lakes Restoration Initiative under Assistance Agreement No. GL 00E00651-0, and the Wisconsin DNR.

Sun., May 5 | 1 - 3pm | For adults

Frog and Turtle Monitoring

Part of the workshop will be outdoors.

Mon., May 6 | 6 - 7:30pm | For adults and teens

Bat Monitoring

Join us for an introduction to bat acoustic monitoring. Part of the session will take place outdoors.

Wed., May 8 or 15 | 6:30 - 8:30 pm | For adults, teens and accompanied children

Snake Monitoring

Help us monitor snakes in the park. Speaker: Julia Robson, Urban Ecology Center Field Technician

Fri., May 10 | 6 - 7pm | For adults and teens

Citizen Science Data

Learn how to become more involved with analyzing our research data. Mon., May 20 | 6 - 7pm | For adults

Invertebrate Monitoring Training

Workshop leader: UW-Whitewater professor Dr. Kerry Katovich. Part of the session will take place outdoors.

Sat., May 25 | 2 - 3:30pm | For adults and teens

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Credits:



Editor

The Urban Ecology Center Newsletter is created and distributed through a team effort by the following people: Carijean Buhk, Ginger Duiven, Demetria Dunn, Judy Krause, Jeff McAvoy, Pat Mueller and Shirley Spelt.

Contributing writers: Beth Heller, Sam Heunik, Glenna Holstein, Willie Karidis, Ken Leinbach and Tim Vargo.



DROPLETS

LEARN MORE ABOUT THESE TOPICS ON OUR WEBSITE

• The Great Alaska Adventure! There is still room to join the Urban Ecology Center in Alaska September 5-14, 2013. Visit Anchorage, Seward and Denali with highlights including the scenic Alaska Railroad, Major Marine tour of Kenai Fjords National Park and a bus trip into the heart of Denali National Park. Contact your guide Willie Karidis, Washington Park Branch Manager and former Alaska resident of 25 years, for more information: wkaridis@urbanecologycenter.org.

Not interested in heading north?

How about travelling south? Come learn how you can join our EcoTravel trip to Bosque del Apache Wildlife preserve in New Mexico this November (see page 7 for details).

• Wish List: Below are some items we need for our three branches.

Riverside Park

2 Garmin GPS units (Geocache grade)
Blenders (2)
Kids gardening gloves
Leaf rakes
Paper shredder
Rain ponchos/jackets- all sizes
Toyota Prius, Honda Insight, Chevy Volt or
Nissan Leaf

Washington Park

Blenders (5)
Buckets (2 to 5 GA size) for fish
Chest waders (w/suspenders)
Kids' work gloves
Laptop computer, netbook or iPad
Plastic storage bins with lids
Potting soil

Menomonee Valley

Chopsticks (4)
Digital camera
Fish net (2)
Frying spoon
Ice cream scooper
Slotted spoon (2)
Tweezers different sizes (5)

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

The Urban Ecology Center's

Neighborhood Environmental Education Project

(NEEP) just wrapped up it's 13th school year! And our first year at our Menomonee Valley branch. That's 13 years of kids connecting with frogs, birds, turtles, the land, science and each other.













75% of students say nature helps them calm down

During a study of 5th and 6th graders 75% said that being in nature helps them calm down when angry and 86% said that it helps them think more clearly

Over
170,000
student visits

(and counting) in 13 years! With students coming multiple times a year, we are able to help them really connect with their neighborhood park!





photo credits: Lisle Bertsche, Jeff McAvoy, Leslie Peckham, Denis Pohlman and John Suhar





Hip Hop at the Urban Ecology Center?

by Glenna Holstein, Branch Manager - Menomonee Valley

If you walk into the Menomonee Valley branch on a Wednesday evening, you might think you've stumbled upon a party — resonant beats and fast moving lyrics emanate from the Valley Room, along with the sound of voices and moving feet. But what's going on is more than a party: it's a hip-hop class that teaches movement, confidence and teamwork. The class is being offered free of charge at the Center through a partnership with Above the Clouds, a non-profit, faith-based creative arts program dedicated to bringing art experiences to children in marginalized communities in Milwaukee.

"Ok, but what on earth does this have to do with urban ecology?" you might be wondering. I asked myself the same question when Above the Clouds first pitched us the idea. I was tremendously excited about the opportunity

to provide something so unique and positive for our kids, but I wasn't quite sure how it fit. But as I've thought about it more and more, I realized it actually makes perfect sense!

First of all, one of the top ten issues we've identified as a focus for our programming at the Center is "healthy living." Many schools are having to cut arts and physical education; this class provides a way to get both, which undoubtedly contributes to a healthy lifestyle.

Secondly, I think that one of the best things about the Urban Ecology Center is that we try to meet people where they are — you don't have to be a total eco-geek to be here! You can be any race, religion, or political affiliation and anywhere on the ecological literacy spectrum. Regardless of who you are you have a place at the Center.

This class gets people to come through our door who might not have found us otherwise. Our hope is to engage them while they're here, and to eventually get them to walk back out that door and into the park! We're even exploring the possibility of holding some future dance and theater classes outside — a perfect synthesis of art and nature!

More importantly, as ecologists we know that the health of our urban ecosystem is dependent on the health of each living thing within it. Healthy kids are happy, they learn better and they are empowered to make healthy choices for themselves and their environment as they grow up. So, if hip hop helps kids be healthy, then it helps our whole ecosystem -- bring it on!



Washington Park Wins MANDI Award!

by Willie Karidis, Branch Manager - Washington Park

This past March both our Menomonee Valley and Washington Park branches were nominated as finalists for a MANDI Award! WOW!

Fantastic! Wait, what's a MANDI?

The Milwaukee Awards for Neighborhood Development Innovation (MANDI) recognize efforts of those working to ensure Milwaukee's central city is a great place to live, learn, work and grow.

The MANDIs are kind of like the Oscars for community building in that winners are selected by peers. A selection committee picked five winners from sixteen finalists. The winners were announced at an awards event held at the Pfister Hotel.

With over 700 people in attendance, the event even felt like the Oscars. Everyone was all dressed up. Oh yeah and the food, especially the desserts, were delicious! Lots of well deserved cheering and hoopla for all the nominees who all share one thing in common — the desire to make Milwaukee a better place to live and work.

The Urban Ecology Center's Menomonee Valley branch was nominated for the State Farm Building Blocks Award which recognizes real estate that enhances the community. Talk about a perfect fit. Menomonee Valley's video presentation was fabulous, highlighting not only the amazing repurposing of the bar into what is now the Center but also the superior Urban Ecology Center programming which the Menomonee Valley team has brought to

the neighborhood. The vision, construction and opening of the Menomonee Valley branch has been a long and powerful journey of time, patience and extreme fortitude which continues to this day. Giant hand clapping, back slappin', foot stompin' and dancin' in the streets to all who have made Menomonee Valley a tangible Milwaukee destination for years to come.

The Clock Shadow Building won the award, but it doesn't realy feel like a loss. The Clock Shadow Building has an amazing story of its own and was recognized for its dedication to community and purposeful recycled architecture choices.

Our Washington Park branch was nominated for the Brewers Community Foundation Public Space Award which recognizes public

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URBAN PROGRAMS & EVENTS

MAY & JUNE

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

Challenges and Celebration!



THIRD ANNUAL GREEN BIRDING

Get your friends together for this unique team-based, fossil-free birding fundraiser. Compete for prizes in categories designed for all ages, skills and mobility levels.

> Saturday, May 11 6a - noon Riverside Park

For adults, teens & kids accompanied by an adult

\$25 per person

Register at

urbanecologycenter.org/greenbirdingchallenge



for teens led by teens

Teams of four teens and one adult will navigate a course that runs through the urban wilderness of Riverside Park and experience:

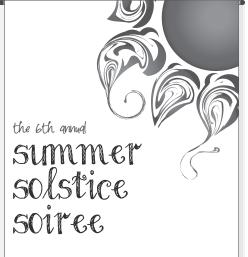


AT Riverside Park

\$25 per team of 4 teens and 1 adult

- × climbing
- × orienteering
- × team building
- × hiking
- × fire building
- × puzzles

To register, please visit urbanecologycenter.org/teensurvivalchallenge or contact Margaret at mcope@urbanecologycenter.org or (414) 964-8505, x138



Celebrate nature in the heart of the city on a magical summer evening.

Proceeds will directly benefit the students, families, neighborhoods, and natural environments in which we carry out our mission.

Saturday, June 15 | 6:30pm at Riverside Park

tickets are \$150 per person

Please check our website or contact Cassie at cmordini@urbanecologycenter.org or 964-8505, x104 for more information.

RIVERSIDE PARK



During Bike to Work Week, May 13-17, stop at our commuter station along the Oak Leaf Trail for a quick bite to eat and a cup of coffee on your bike commute to work. Also,

all week long you can drop off any unwanted bikes at our branch to benefit Vulture Space, a non-profit, do-it-yourself bike shop.

— Jamie Ferschinger, Branch Manager - Riverside Park

WASHINGTON PARK



Did you know that almost every Saturday during the summer at 10am we offer a Water Safety class here at Washington Park? If you are a member you will

need to complete this class before you can check out our canoes and kayaks. Look on in this guide for our schedule.

- Willie Karidis, Branch Manager - Washington Park

MENOMONEE VALLEY



There are so many opportunities to explore the Valley in May and June! Join us for Community Planting Day on May 18th. And, if you'd like, stick around for the

Bike Federation's Bike Fiesta immediately following the planting to celebrate the end of Bike to Work Week! Learn to Grow Your Own Groceries with Milwaukee Urban Gardens on May 4th, or go Fishing in the Menomonee River on June 8th!

- Glenna Holstein, Branch Manager - Menomonee Valley

All branches will be closed on Mon., May 27. Riverside Park will close at noon on June 15th.

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



FAMILY PROGRAMS

MAY & JUNE

Quick Guide

Young Scientists Club 🕏

From hiking to gardening to helping with research to caring for our animals, every day is a new adventure.

(RP) Every Mon. - Thu. except
May 27 | 4 - 5:30pm
For ages 5 through 12 | \$10 annual fee
(Plus suggested daily donation - \$5)
Space is limited to 12 participants,
please register ahead of time

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

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

Explore and Restore Expedition for kids

Explore and Restore Expeditions are supported by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Great Lakes Restoration Initiative under Assistance Agreement No. GL 00E00651-0, and the Wisconsin DNR.

Life Under a Rock

Discover amazing aquatic creatures. Plan to get wet!
Transportation provided or meet us at Hubbard Park.

(RP) Mon., May 13 | 4:30 - 6:30pm For everyone | Free - donations appreciated (Nonmembers: \$5)

Benthos, the Bottom Link in the Aquatic Food Chain

Benthos are invertebrates that live on or near the bottom of a river -- the benthic zone. Join U.S. Geological Survey researcher Amanda Bell and view the benthos in the Menomonee River in Hart Park. Transportation provided.

(RP) Sat., May 18 | 10am - noon For everyone | Free - donations appreciated (Nonmembers: \$5)

Animal Feeding 🕏

Help feed the Center's resident turtles, snakes and fish.

(WP) & (MV) Every Sat.

(RP) Every Sat. except Jun. 15 | 1pm For everyone | Free donations appreciated

Happy Mother's Day Bat Style! **5**

Meet real bats from the Wisconsin Humane Society and learn how a different mammal species does motherhood.

(MV) Sat., May 4 | 2 - 3:30pm For everyone | Freedonations appreciated

Girl Scouts: Petal Pride

Practice tending wildflowers. Plus, you can earn your Flowers badge! (MV) Sat., May 11 | 9am - noon For Juniors, Grades 4-5 | To register, please visit https://www.gswise.org/

Family Yoga in the Park

Join us for a nature-themed yoga workshop! Bring a mat (we will have some mats on hand). No yoga experience required.

(WP) Sat., May 18 & Jun. 22 | 10 - 11am For families | Free donations appreciated

Bike and Kite Afternoon

Build your own paper kite and then bike with us to Veterans Park and the Family Kite Festival! Bikes available.

(RP) Sun., May 26 | 2 - 4pm For families and children | Adults: \$6 (Nonmembers: \$9); Children: \$4 (Nonmembers: \$7)

Food Fridays 🕏

Help us care for our Learning Gardens.

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

E.B. Garner's 16th Annual Fishing Day

Some fishing equipment available courtesy of the D.N.R. Rod and Reel Program and Mr. White's A & C Live Bait Shop. No fishing license required!

(WP) Sat., Jun. 1 | 8am - 4pm For families | Free donations appreciated

Fishing in the Menomonee River &

We will provide basic instruction and all necessary fishing equipment.

(MV) Sat., Jun. 8 | 10 - 11:30am For adults and families with children 5 and up | Adults: \$6 (Nonmembers: \$9), Children: \$4 (Nonmembers: \$7)

Darners and Darters: Dragonfly Excursion

Learn about the life of dragonflies, then head to the river to catch some!

(RP) Sun., Jun. 9 | 1 - 2:30pm For families and children | Adults: \$6 (Nonmembers: \$9); Children: \$4 (Nonmembers: \$7)

Make-Your-Own Nature Journal! &

Join Tia Richardson and learn how to make a complete handmade journal using recycled materials!

(MV) Sat., Jun. 22 | 1 - 4pm For adults and families with children ages 8 and up | \$20 (Nonmembers: \$25)

Grandparents and Kids Nature Hike: Incredible Insects

Join us as we search for some sixlegged friends. For grandparents and their grandkids to enjoy together!

(WP) Wed., Jun. 26 | 1 - 2:30pm For everyone | Free donations appreciated

Snakes of the World 🕏

Meet snakes from around the globe! (MV) Sat., Jun. 29 | 1:30 - 3:30pm For everyone | Freedonations appreciated

E.B. Garner Fishing Club 🕏

Enjoy a fun evening fishing with local fishing teacher E.B. Garner. All equipment is provided.

(WP) Wed., Jun. 26 | 4 - 7pm For everyone | Free donations appreciated

Science Saturdays and Sundays &

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

TEEN PROGRAMS

TOGS Tournament

Bring your friends and compete in a variety of **t**rivia, **o**utdoor **g**ames and **s**ervice projects. Create a team of four or we'll put you on a team.

(RP) Sat., Jun. 22 | 2 - 4pm For teens | \$5 (Nonmember: \$10)

Girl Scouts: Wasteland to Children's Forest

Meet an urban forestry specialist, work in our forest and earn your Cadette Trees Badge!

(RP) Sat., Jun. 29 | 9am - noon For Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors, grades 6-12 |To register, please visit https://www.gswise.org/

HOMESCHOOL SERIES

Homeschool Series: Insectigators

Explore what makes an insect, where we can find them around here and why they are so important!

Bugs in the River

(MV) Tue., May 14 | 2 - 3:30pm

Bugs by Canoe

(WP) Tue., May 28 | 2 - 3:30pm

Bugs Through the Prairie (RP) Jun. 11 | 2 - 3:30pm

For children age 5 and older \$5 (Nonmembers: \$7)

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:

ONLINE: www.urbanecologycenter.o

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



ADULT LEARNING

Quick Guide

Research Lecture Series presented by BMO Harris

The Tamarack Swamp: *A Rare Gem in the*

Glacial Plains 🖔

Speaker: Anne Reis, GIS Specialist, Urban Ecology Center. (RP) Tue., May 14 | 7 - 8:30pm For adults | \$5 (Nonmembers: \$10)

Lessons from the Heartland: A Turbulent Half-Century of Public Education in an Iconic American City &

Meet Barbara J. Miner, author of Lessons from the Heartland. Book signing to follow.

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

Explore and Restore Expedition for adults

Explore and Restore Expeditions are supported by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Great Lakes Restoration Initiative under Assistance Agreement No. GL 00E00651-0, and the Wisconsin DNR.

Removing Barriers and Reconnecting Habitats

Join Ozaukee County Fish Passage Program Manager Matt Aho on a tour. Transportation available.

(RP) Mon., May 6 | 4 - 6pm For adults and teens/ Free (Nonmembers: \$5)

HUBs Help Fish

Join Groundwork Milwaukee to view the Hanging Underwater Baskets in the western Menomonee River. Transportation available.

(RP) Sun., May 19 | 2 - 4pm For adults and teens | Free (Nonmembers: \$5)

ART AT THE CENTER

grow Workshop with Yevgeniya Kaganovich &

Help Artist in Residence, Yevgeniya Kaganovich create art from plastic bags. *grow* is a year-long, evolving art installation of intertwining plant-like forms. Stop in to help this project grow all year.

(RP) Sat., Jun 1 & Jun. 8 | 11am - 4pm For everyone | Free donations appreciated

Menomonee Valley Walking Tours

(MV) Every 1st & 3rd Wed. | 10 -11am For adults | Free - donations appreciated

Riverside Trail Runners

(RP) Every Wed. | 6 - 7:30pm For adults and teens | \$10 (Nonmembers: \$15) | Price includes all Wednesdays in May and June

Community and School Garden Design &

Cosponsored by Victory Garden Initiative (WP) Sat., May 4 | 9am - noon

Grow Your Own Groceries! &

Join us for a bilingual gardening workshop taught by Milwaukee Urban Gardens (MUG)!

(MV) Sat., May 4 | 10am - noon For adults | MUG and/or Center members: \$2 (Nonmembers: \$4)

Discussion Course: Hungry for Change; Food, Ethics and Sustainability &

Join our Northwest Earth Institute 7-week course. Fee includes book.

(RP) Every Tue., May 7 -Jun. 18 | 6:30 - 8pm For adults | \$30 (Nonmembers: \$35)

Big Biking Bird Day

Get exercise and find urban birds!

(WP) Thu., May 9 | 8am - 5pm For adults and accompanied children Free - donations appreciated

Spring Has Sprung 4-Part Herbal Series &

Learn spring plant lore and applications. Instructor: Linda Conroy. Registration required.

(RP) Thus. May 9, 16, 23 & 30 | 6 - 8:30pm For adults | \$85 for the series (Nonmembers: \$100 for the series)

Basic Photovoltaics (Solar Energy) さ

Hosted by the Midwest Renewable Energy Association.

(MV) Fri., May 10 | 9am - 5pm For adults | MREA members: \$90 (Nonmembers: \$110) Center members: use the discount code urban10 to get \$10 off course fee

Native Plant Sale: Prairie Future Seed Company &

A portion of the profits from this sale will be donated to Center.

(RP) Sats., May 11 & Jun. 1 | 9am - 1pm For everyone | Free donations appreciated

6th Annual Vegan Bake Sale ♂

Gluten-free options will also be available. Part of the proceeds will be donated to the Center. Cash only.

(RP) Sat., May 11 | 10am - 4pm

For everyone | Free - donations appreciated

Photovoltaic Site Assessor Training &

Hosted by the Midwest Renewable Energy Association. Prerequisite: Basic Photovoltaics (Solar Electricity).

(MV) Sat., May 11 | 9am - 5pm For adults | MREA members: \$90 (Nonmembers: \$110) Urban Ecology members: use the discount code urban10 to get \$10 off course fee

Sustainable Coffee Tasting &

(RP) Sat., May 11 or Jun. 8 | 10 - 11am For adults | \$6 (Nonmembers - \$8)

Knitting a Fun Sun Hat, 3- Part Series &

Needles, pattern and instruction provided. You need know how to cast on, knit and purl. Registration required

(RP) Sats., May 11, 18 & 25 | 1 - 3pm For adults and kids 12 and older accompanied by an adult | \$25 (Nonmembers - \$30)

From Beak to Tail: All About the Life of Birds &

(RP) Mon., May 13 & | 6 - 7pm (WP) Wed., Jun. 5 | 6 - 7pm For adults | Members: \$5 (Nonmembers: \$10)

Big Bird Day

Help us count birds! Bring a lunch.

(WP) Thu., May 16 | 8am - 5pm
For adults and accompanied children
Free - donations appreciated

Photo Phenology

Photograph and sketch the natural area around the Center.

(MV) May 18 & Jun. 29 | 10 - 11:30am For adults, teens and families Free - donations appreciated

Cranes of Bosque del Apache Trip -Information Session &

Come learn how you can join our EcoTravel trip to Bosque del Apache Wildlife Preserve in New Mexico.

(RP) Thu., May 23 | 6 - 7pm For adults | Free - donations appreciated

Garden Planning Basics 🕏

Cosponsored by
Victory Garden Initiative
Learn how to make the most of a small garden space this season.

(WP) Wed., May 29 | 6:30 - 8pm For adults | \$10

Pondering a Backyard Pond? &

Cosponsored by Victory Garden Initiative Speaker: Glen Grieger.

(WP) Sat., Jun. 1 | 10 - 11:30am For adults and accompanied children | \$5 (Nonmembers: \$10)

The Good, The Bad, and the Buggy &

Cosponsored by Victory Garden Initiative

Learn how to combat plant diseases and pests naturally. (WP) Sat., Jun. 8 | 9am - noon For adults | \$18 per session or \$110 for the entire series

Cooking Circle: *The Whole Beet &*

Learn how to utilize an entire beet plant to achieve no-waste. Recipes and handouts provided. Registration required by June 14.

(RP) Mon., Jun. 17 | 6 - 8:30pm For adults and teens | \$25 (Nonmembers: \$30)

Getting to Know The North Country Scenic Trail &

Speakers: Bill Menke, Trail Coordinator for Wisconsin, David Cowles Director of Development, North Country Trail Association.

(RP) Tue., Jun. 18 | 7 - 8pm For adults and teens | Free donations appreciated

All branches will be closed on Mon., May 27.

Riverside Park branch will close at noon on June 15th.



URBAN ADVENTURES

MAY & JUNE

Quick Guide

Open Climbs

Stop in and climb our three story rock wall. All equipment is provided and trained belayers are on hand.

(RP) Thu., May 2 | 5 - 7pm (RP) Every Sun. | 2 - 4pm

(RP) Every Tue. starting

in Jun. | 5 - 7pm For adults, teens, and families | Adults: \$10 (Nonmembers - \$12); Children: \$8 (Nonmembers -\$10) - discounted punch passes

available at reception desk

Water Safety Course &

Interested in borrowing our boats? Come take a water safety course.

(RP) Every Mon. except May 27 | 6 - 6:30pm (RP) Every Sun. starting May 12 | 1 - 1:30pm

(WP) Every Sat. | 10 - 10:30am

(MV) Every Fri. | 6 - 6:30pm (MV) Every Tue. | 6 - 6:30pm For adults | Free - donations appreciated (Nonmembers: \$5)

Volunteer Belayer Training

Learn climbing wall procedure and safety so you can belay at our climbs. (RP) Tue., May 7 | 5:30 - 8pm

or Sat., May 18 | 1 - 3:30pm For adults | Free

Bike-to-Work Week Commuter Station &

Stop for a quick bite and a coffee along your commute. Special thanks to Alterra Coffee Roasters and the Bike Federation.

(RP) & (MV) Mon., May 13 -Fri. May 17 | 7 - 9am Free - donations appreciated

Vulture Space Annual Bike Donation Drive &

Donate your unwanted bikes at the Center to benefit Vulture Space, a nonprofit, do-it-yourself bike shop. Any bike accepted. Look for the bike corral.

(RP) Mon., May 13 - Fri. May 17 | 7am - 9pm

Canoeing Basics

Practice your canoeing technique. All skill levels welcome.

(WP) Sat., May 18 or Jun 15 | 11am - noon For adults and accompanied children Adults: \$6 (Nonmembers: \$9), Children: \$4 (Nonmembers: \$7)

Birding the Milwaukee River

Join us for a paddle as we look for birds. Bring a lunch. Equipment provided.

(RP) Sun., May 26 | 8am - 5pm For adults | \$45 (Nonmembers: \$50)

INTEREST GROUPS

Victory Garden Initiative Eat and Meet &

(RP) Tue., May 7 & Jun. 4 | 6:30 - 8pm

Photo Club 🕏

(RP) Thus., May 2 & Jun. 6 | 6:30 - 9pm

New Urban Friends & (RP) Mon., May 13 | 7 - 9pm

Friends of Real Food: Potluck Dinner and Program & (RP) Weds., May 8 & Jun. 12 | 6 - 8pm

Urban Echo Poets &

(RP) Thus., May 9 & Jun. 13 | 7 - 8:30pm

Urban Stargazers 🕏

(RP) Thus., May 9 & Jun. 13 | 7 - 8:30pm

Transition Milwaukee: All City Hub Meeting

(RP) Mon., Jun. 24 6:30 - 8:30pm

Early Morning Birdwalks

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

Introduction to Canoeing

Equipment provided. **Meet at the Rowing Club Boathouse**, 1990 N. Commerce St.

Sat., Jun 1 | 10:30am - 1pm or Sat., Jun 15 | 10:30am - 1pm For adults, teens and families | Adults and teens: \$20 (Nonmembers: \$25); Children: Free - donations appreciated | Parents must sign a waiver for all children under 18 and paddle in same canoe with child

Introduction to Kayaking

Equipment provided. **Meet at the Rowing Club Boat House**, 1990 N. Commerce St.

Sun., Jun 2 | 12:30 - 3pm For adults and teens | \$20 (Nonmembers: \$25) | Parents must sign waiver for all children under 18

River Rhythms Paddle

Join us for a paddle to Pere Marquette Park. Equipment provided. **Meet at the Rowing Club Boat House**, 1990 N. Commerce St.

Wed., Jun 12 | 6:30 - 9pm For adults and families | Adults: \$15 (Nonmembers: \$20); Paddling kids: \$7 (Nonmembers: \$10); Kids under 10 who do not paddle: Free - donations appreciated

History of Milwaukee Paddle

You can choose to canoe or kayak. Boats, paddles and PFDs provided. Meet at the Rowing Club Boathouse, 1990 N. Commerce St. Sun., Jun 23 | 10:30am - 12:30pm For adults and teens | \$10 (Nonmembers: \$15) | Parents must sign a waiver for all children under 18

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Volunteer Orientation Ġ

Come find out how you can contribute your time and talents here!

(RP) Sat., May 11 | 10:30am - noon (RP) Wed., May 15 | 5:30 - 7pm (RP) Fri., May 31 | 3:00 PM - 4:30pm (RP) Wed., Jun 5 | 5:30 - 7pm (RP) Mon., Jun 17 | 10:30am - noon (RP) Sat., Jun 29 | 10:30am - noon

(WP) Tue., May 7 | 4:30 - 5:30pm (WP) Fri., May 17 | 3 - 4:00pm (WP) Sat., May 25 | 10:30 - 11:30am (WP) Thu., Jun 6 | 4 - 5pm (WP) Tue., Jun 18 | 3:30 - 4:30pm (WP) Sat., Jun 29 | 10:30 - 11:30am

(MV) Thu., May 16 | 5:30 - 7pm (MV) Fri., May 24 | 3 - 4:30pm (MV) Sat., Jun 1 | 10:30am - noon (MV) Fri., Jun 14 | 3 - 4:30pm (MV) Thu., Jun 20 | 5:30 - 7pm For adults and teens

Menomonee Valley Teen Volunteer Orientation &

(MV) Sat., May 4 | 2 - 3:30pm For teens

Spring Bird Banding

Help us band birds as they make their spring migration.

(RP) Tues., May 7, 14 & 28, Weds., May 15, 22 & 29 | 5:15am - noon For everyone | Free donations appreciated

Community Planting Day

See next page for details.

(MV) Sat., May 18 | 9:30 - 11:30am For adults and accompanied children over 6 | Free - donations appreciated

Frog and Toad Survey

Dress for the weather and wear footwear that can get muddy.

(WP) Thu., May 23 | 8pm - midnight For adults and accompanied children

Weekly volunteer opportunities include (see our website for details):

Work Outside Wednesdays Compost Crew Burdock Brigade Volunteer Papermaking 🕏 Forestry Fridays Tune Up Thursdays & Youth Project Crew Volunteer Park Ranger Crew

REGISTER:

ONLINE: www.urbanecologycenter.o

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



World Wide Jam

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and other fruits. The entire process takes only a couple of days but the taste is out of this world.

I started at the Center a few years after this tradition began but I have been extremely fortunate to have been able to carry it on as coordinator of the lecture series. The list of people who have received Edie and Gil's jellies is a veritable Who's Who of important names in research and conservation, including all of the celebrities mentioned in the opening paragraph, as well as Bill McKibben, Richard Crossley, George Archibald, and dozens of other local and national names.

I always look forward to listening to the fascinating speakers who generously donate their time to the Center, but my favorite part is the end when I get to present this prized local delicacy. I tell each of these guests, the jellies are not available in stores; the only way to get one is to speak at the Center! So I think all in all, they get a pretty good deal.

The Urban Ecology Center is currently planning the 2013-14 lecture series. If you know of people locally, or nationally, who would give a compelling program, please contact Tim Vargo (tvargo@urbanecologycenter.org). Who knows? They might share their jelly with you!

Washington Park Wins MANDI

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space that builds the community. There are so many inspiring projects being done in Milwaukee and to be recognized in their company was truly a pleasure and honor.

Washington Park was fortunate to win! The award recognizes all the collective work done over the years by lots of wonderful people and everything we're doing now to revitalize Washington Park. Through our work together, Washington Park has been activated in an incredibly positive way: crime has been reduced by 56%, and the park is alive with a variety of unique activities that is relevant to the park's community. This is truly a collaborative award with Milwaukee County Parks, Washington

Park Partners and the Urban Ecology Center all working with the local neighborhoods to bring a new direction and vision to our part of Milwaukee. High fives all around!

I am very thankful for the recognition--it is wonderful to hear people acknowledge Washington Park for the treasure that it is. But the thing about neighborhood development and innovation is that it's an ongoing process — we still have more work to do! Please consider helping create our future, whether by volunteering or making a monetary contribution. It all is necessary in returning Washington Park to the historic Milwaukee landmark it deserves to be.

Teen Survival Challenge?

You may have noticed that our annual Teen Adventure Challenge has changed. Our new Teen Survival Challenge is an exciting event designed by our High School Outdoor Leaders. Are you up for this challenge? The Teen Survival Challenge includes some hiking and climbing like our previous Adventure event, but adds new challenges like fire building.

We hope you'll join this event designed by teens and led by teens! Register at urbanecologycenter.org/teensurvivalchallenge

Citizen Science Spring Workshops

continued from page 2

Moth Nights

Learn about our Mothing Surveys project. Speaker: Allysa Hallet, UWM Graduate student. Attend one or both nights. Part 2 will be held outdoors.

Part 1: Wed., May 29 | 5:30 - 6:30pm Part 2: Sat., Jun 1 | 8 - 10pm For adults and teens

Mammal Monitoring

Part of the workshop will be held outdoors. Tue., Jun 25 | 5:30 - 6:45pm | For adults and teens

Dragonfly and Damselfly Monitoring

Become involved in our newest Citizen Science project: Dragonfly and Damselfly surveys! Part of the workshop will be outdoors.

Sat., Jun 29 | 1:30 - 3:30pm |

For adults and teens

#

Thank You to Our Donors

We thank all of you who have become members, renewed your membership, given a gift membership or made a donation to our mission. The list of local foundations, corporations and individuals who have donated to the Center within the last two months can be found on our website at **urbanecologycenter.org/thankyoulist.**

Menomonee Valley Community Planting Day

Join us in the Menomonee Valley to plant native plants along the Hank Aaron Trail. Dress for the weather and bring gloves and trowels if you can. Meet at the Center and we'll head out to the planting site together!

(MV) Sat., May 18 | 9:30 - 11:30am For adults and accompanied children over 6 | Free - donations appreciated



Impact of Urban Nature

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protocols to measure how natural areas adjacent to each of our Centers are used by the general public. This was no easy task. We can't be in the park 24/7 counting and interviewing people, so population estimation based on our sample was required. Plus, we didn't want to double count park use by people participating in all Center-run activities, who are already part of our evaluation. Our data collection needed to be comprehensive, but simple enough for students and volunteers to carry out the research year round, long after John's project was over. And it needed to meet the Center's goals and John's academic requirements.

Luckily, John was able to vet research methods over the summer with our research advisors and his academic team, so that (after several iterations) the study was launched during the fall semester, corresponding to the start of the Center's fiscal year. After a successful hand-off, two students from Cardinal Stritch are continuing the project this semester. Our estimates will improve as we collect more data over all seasons and over multiple years.

Here is some of what we've learned:

Most exciting is that we now have an estimated number of people visiting parks and trails during the first 6 months of our fiscal year: just under 45,000 people in Riverside Park, just over 40,000 people in Washington Park and about 23,000 in the Menomonee Valley. There is more recreational use of Washington Park by children and youth than adults. In Riverside Park and Menomonee Valley the vast majority of park users are adults.

Most common activities, in order of frequency, include biking, walking, playing, jogging and dog walking. Other uses include sitting and fishing. Surveys were conducted 7 days per week and during morning, afternoon and evening periods.

A large part of the Center's mission is to encourage people to get out into nature. While we love it when people do this through our programs, we get really excited when people are inspired to explore on their own. This is at the heart of all we do and is the reason we work so hard to make sure our parks are inviting and safe. Combining the Park Use estimates and the Center's 45,600 program participants, over 150,000 people were impacted by our work in the first 6-months of our fiscal year. Wow!

In addition to learning about how people are playing in nature, through a second study we are deepening our understanding of the impact of outdoor play on health and well-being of children. This robust research partnership includes six schools (Academia de Lenguaje y Bellas Artes School, Alexander Mitchell Integrated Arts School, Greenfield Bilingual School, Longfellow Elementary School, Nativity Jesuit Middle School and St. Rafael the Archangel School), the Medical College of Wisconsin, Menomonee Valley Partners, and UWM's Center for Urban Initiatives and Research. This project specifically focuses on the Menomonee Valley neighborhood, where in July we will significantly increase access to nature with the grand opening of the new park.

5th and 6th grade students shared the following information with us:

- 86% said that being in nature helps them think more clearly
- 94% say they feel healthier
- 75% indicated that nature helps them calm down when they are angry
- 85% of the students also indicated that they think being outside in nature is fun!

While these students think that being in nature is fun and healthy, 85% of students also indicated that their parents do not encourage outdoor play and 35% of these same students spend more than 3 hours in front of the TV and an additional 42%

spent 1-3 hours watching TV each day.

Which makes us ask: if playing outdoors in nature doesn't cost any money, is considered to be fun and healthy by kids (and many studies), why don't parents encourage their children to play outside in nature as often as possible? As an organization that strives to continually learn and to deepen our impact, the Urban Ecology Center's aim is to dig into this question next.

There is so much more to learn, but it appears from these two studies that nature can provide thousands, even hundreds of thousands, of urban residents an opportunity to learn, relax and engage in a healthy lifestyle outside in nature near their home.

Although this project called the "Urban Ecology Center" is far from over (and hopefully never will be) we now have one more source that shows us that it works!

Stories on our blog published every week at:

urbanecologycenter.org/blog

Who Ever Heard of a Solar Chimney?

by Omar Bonilla-Ortiz





What Flows From a Tree and is Sweet as Can Be?

Leaving a Legacy: Remembering Gertrude "Tula" Erskine



Coming up in May & June

Native Plant and Animal of the Month
Gardening Tips
Donor and Member profiles
and more!



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, over 2700 members and many in-kind donors the Center serves over 80,000 people per year.

To make a contribution, please see below 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., Milwaukee, WI 53208) (414) 344-5460 Fax: (414) 344-5462

wkaridis@urbanecologycenter.org

Hours of operation: Tuesday - Friday: 4 - 7pm 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	Name
Did you know you can give a donation, join or renew your membership securely online? Visit www.urbanecologycenter.org and click either "donations" or "membership"	Address
Renew or begin your membership, choose one:	
☐ Individual (\$25) includes guest ☐ Family (\$35) ☐ Student (\$12)	State/Zip
Financial assistance is available. Please call the Center at (414) 964-8505 and ask to speak to someone on our membership team for details.	Phone
Give a gift membership:	Email
☐ Individual (\$25) includes guest ☐ Family (\$35) ☐ Student (\$12)	My neighborhood park is
Recipient NameAddress	☐ Riverside ☐ Washington ☐ Menomonee ☐ I love them all! ☐ I would like to volunteer. Please contact me.
City, State, Zip Day Phone Eve Email	Charge my membership to: ☐ Master Card ☐ Visa
Send the announcement card to ☐ Me ☐ Gift recipient Occasion Deliver by	Card Number
Donation (in addition to membership)	Expiration Date/ Signature Date
Please accept my gift to support: ☐ Provide a membership for a low income family (\$35) ☐ Provide an educational program for families (\$75) ☐ Provide a summer camp scholarship (\$195) ☐ Support a high school summer intern (\$600)	Please make your check payable to: Urban Ecology Center and return it with this form to:
 Restore native plants to an acre of public land (\$1000) Sponsor a school for a year, 24 field trips for city kids! (\$5000) Total Enclosed 	Riverside Park, 1500 E. Park Place Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53211 www.UrbanEcologyCenter.org Riverside Park, 1500 E. Park Place URBAN ECOLOGY CENTER®



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IN THIS ISSUE

IMPACT OF URBAN NATURE

By Ken Leinbach and Beth Heller

Are we really having the impacts we set out to accomplish? Are students really learning? Are our parks, that we claim are now safe, really being used? ... And how do we actually know?

WORLD WIDE JAM

By Tim Vargo

What do the late Senator Gaylord Nelson, polar explorer Eric Larsen, South African conservationist Louis Liebenberg, poet Wendell Berry, Carl Leopold (late son of Aldo) ... all have in common?

HIP HOP AT THE URBAN ECOLOGY CENTER?

By Glenna Holstein

If you walk into the Menomonee Valley branch on a Wednesday evening, you might think you've stumbled upon a party...

WASHINGTON PARK WINS MANDI AWARD!

By Willie Karidis

This past March both our Menomonee Valley and Washington Park branches were nominated as finalists for a MANDI Award! WOW!

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















of students say being in nature helps them calm down when angry