



Together, We are an Ocean

by Ken Leinbach, Executive Director

"Individually, we are one drop. Together, we are an ocean." — Ryunosuke Satoro

I love the community we've built at the Urban Ecology Center! I am constantly amazed by the dedicated and passionate people I meet here. Here are four affirming vignettes – all from one day!

First I had a meeting at Menomonee Valley:

Hi, can I help you? Is this your first time here? Let me tell you just how special this place is. Have you walked through Three Bridges Park yet? It's pretty spectacular and just opened up! Did you know you can borrow fishing rods and even a kayak if you wanted to enjoy the Menomonee River? They don't rent them, but actually lend them to you! ... and she went on.

This volunteer receptionist, Dana, had never met me so I got to experience being a visitor for the first time through her fresh eyes. Her enthusiasm was infectious and her pride palpable. It was great to be anonymous. Once I shared my position, she exclaimed, "Are you Ken?" Having been there over a year, I guess she had heard about me. She was only a little embarrassed and we ended up talking for a long time.

As I probed deeper into her year of volunteering, I was impressed with her Center knowledge, her ownership and even more so with her ideas for other ways the Center could grow and improve. That is what is so great about deep community engagement ... it makes us so much better!

Later I found myself on a tour along the Milwaukee River where I had another fun, anonymous encounter at the new canoe launch.

"We've had bites but have been fishing for only 15 minutes. Going after

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Wow! What a Year!

by Beth Heller, Senior Director of Education and Strategic Planning

Autumn is when nature provides us with a reminder of change: leaves become vibrant, the sun sets early and morning frost is on windows. It is also the season when we at the Urban Ecology Center reflect on our year and the changes we made as an organization. Our fiscal year begins in September in order to include an entire school year, so fall is the time when we're getting ready for a "new year."

2012-13 was a year of tremendous growth. During the year, we:

- Opened the Menomonee Valley branch
- Established 24 acres of outdoor classroom along the Menomonee River on a former brownfield/railroad yard
- Planted an orchard in Washington Park and GE Healthcare gave the whole building a facelift
- Opened the Milwaukee Rotary Centennial Arboretum, a revitalized greenspace grown out of a combination of post-industrial, county park and riparian lands

These accomplishments are visible at each site, but we also want to know if all our work, as we state in our mission, "fosters ecological understanding as inspiration for change". Here are two of the results we track in order to gauge how we are achieving our mission:

Our land stewards have worked tirelessly to create beautiful spaces that improve the richness of our urban habitats and help people connect to nature. Is our community connecting? We think so! Our research team created a park-use study indicating that people visited the natural areas of our three branches over 208,000 times last year! Add program participation and visits to our buildings for a grand total of over 307,000 visits!

Each year, as our budget grows, we endeavor for volunteer labor to grow with it. Our goal each year is to have in-kind labor match

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Branch Highlights



RIVERSIDE PARK

Whether it is your first visit or your 50th, you'll enjoy the Rotary Centennial Arboretum even more on a guided docent tour. Volunteer docents will be leading public tours in November describing ecological, historical and community aspects of the arboretum. Join us!



WASHINGTON PARK

We just can't wait for snow and cold temperatures! Here at the Washington Park branch we have snowshoes, cross country skis and ice skates to borrow. Give a gift membership and share our great gear with a friend!



MENOMONEE VALLEY

Three Bridges Park just gets better every day! Come visit and experience the park as we move into winter. Hopefully we'll get some snow — the Hank Aaron State Trail in the park will be a great place to snowshoe and cross country ski!

Wow! What a Year!

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10% of our budget. Using the rate of \$18.50 per volunteer hour, as estimated by the Independent Sector, last year we documented \$375,011 worth of contributed labor. Thanks to over 3,000 volunteers, we exceeded our budget goal. Wow! (See more info about our volunteer support on the next page).

With all this activity, we still wanted to know are people learning anything? This past year marked the completion of a science achievement study of our school program, the Neighborhood Environmental Education Project. Conducted by a reputable external evaluator, the Center for Urban Initiatives and Research, the study showed encouraging results. For example, students moved from answering just over 50% of the questions correctly before their astronomy class to 75% correctly after. We surveyed four different content areas. All assessments show statistically significant improvement in understanding science content, regardless of instructor or branch.

The questions matched standardized test content and format, showing a correlation between our trips and improved science scores. This indicates that the structure and format of

our hands-on science education is effective, as all of our educators saw similar results.

Science understanding is a critical part of developing ecological literacy — which is a core part of our mission. In addition to the science achievement study, over 4000 participants in the school program completed ecological literacy specific surveys. On average 93% of them indicated they 1) felt more connected to nature, 2) developed their critical thinking skills, 3) deepened their sense of belonging to a community and 4) strengthened their respect for the environment because of their experiences with us. 99% of the students, teachers and administrators surveyed would recommend us to their friends.

So, yes! Based on these and many additional measures, we believe we are creating the change we aspire to achieve through our mission. This kind of change is good, and yet there is so much more work ahead to achieve an ecologically literate and sustainable community. As you watch the seasons change, you are invited to join the Center as we work toward important changes for our urban children, adults and natural areas. Together we can achieve amazing things! 🌱



DROPLETS

LEARN MORE ABOUT THESE TOPICS ON OUR WEBSITE

- We're excited to announce that the Urban Ecology Center was chosen as one of the 2013 River Heroes by Milwaukee Riverkeeper. The award honors those who share Milwaukee Riverkeeper's vision to protect and improve water quality and wildlife habitat in the Milwaukee, Menomonee and Kinnickinnic River Watersheds. Also chosen were our project partners, Menomonee Valley Partners and the Milwaukee Rotary Club.
- The Milwaukee Rotary Centennial Arboretum Grand Opening was a fantastic success! Many thanks to the Milwaukee Rotary and the many, many people who helped create this greenspace.
- Where's the Wish List? Our Wish List has moved to our website! Below are some items we need for our three branches. Visit urbanecologycenter.org/wishlist for an expanded list.

Riverside Park

46" LCD or plasma tv
Anabat detector
Bedsheets
Hybrid or electric vehicle
Trimble Juno GPS

Washington Park

Aquarium pumps & filters
Small air compressor
Power washer
Large capacity dehumidifier
Fleece to make mittens
Chopping knives
Hockey sticks

Menomonee Valley

Animal homes (bird or wasps nests)
Animal mounts, skulls & pelts
Aquariums & terrariums (55 gallon+)
GPS Units
Headlamps (backpacking style, 4)
Field guides (bird, tree, wildflower, water critters)

Si usted habla
español

y quiere más información acerca de los programas y eventos, visítenos en nuestro centro en Menomonee Valley o llámenos al 414-431-2940. La mayoría del personal en Menomonee Valley le puede asistir en español.

Credits:



Carijean Buhk
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, Glenna Holstein, Willie Karidis, Ken Leinbach and Chad Thomack.

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SEE FOR YOURSELF!

We have *Amazing Volunteer Support!* >



3,192

VOLUNTEERS

contributed

OVER 20,000 HOURS

in our 2012-13 fiscal year!



In fiscal year 2012-13 volunteers saved the Center

\$375,011*

**VOLUNTEERS
HELP US WITH
SO MUCH!**

Including: Land Stewardship, environmental education, citizen science research, greeting visitors at the reception desk, building stuff, paddling, belaying climbers on our rock wall, and much more!

* Based on Independent Sector's value of volunteer time for Wisconsin at \$18.50 per hour. Learn more at independentsector.org



*We can't thank our volunteers enough;
but each year we do our best at the*

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION PARTY!

This year's event will be on
Wednesday, November 20th

*Details
on Pg. 5*

Want to share your time and talent with the Urban Ecology Center?
Learn how at www.urbanecologycenter.org/volunteer



The Importance of Your Story

by Glenna Holstein, Branch Manager - Menomonee Valley

As part of my job I get to meet a lot of really interesting and wonderful people. In fact, that's one of my favorite parts of this work! For example, I recently got to meet Surhabi Shah, the Director of the US Environmental Protection Agency Urban Water Initiative. She was in Milwaukee and wanted to meet with a few of the folks involved in the work in the Menomonee Valley to learn about what we're doing to restore that waterway.

The EPA wants to know what we're doing here? Amazing! But also a little nerve wracking.

As the meeting began, I was turning over all sorts of thoughts in my head about how I could tell the story of the Urban Ecology Center to this national environmental leader. This was a big opportunity.

As the meeting went on though, most of the focus turned to the economic revitalization of the Valley and the urban planning strategies that had been implemented. That conversation was fascinating and I learned a ton by listening (another part of my job I really love — but I'll save that for another article). As the meeting ended, I realized I hadn't gotten to tell Surhabi very much about the Center at all. I had one job at this meeting and I blew it.

I went over to Surhabi to say goodbye, still kicking myself over the missed opportunity. But as she shook my hand she said, "I wanted to tell you, I think you're doing really good work at the Urban Ecology Center. I sat next to a man on the plane who told me all about your Center, and it just sounds like a really great place."

Ha! Here I was so worried about how to tell the "best" story of the Urban Ecology Center and not having the chance to do it, when it turns out someone had already done it for me! My job is so easy sometimes...

That day was a powerful reminder for me of the importance of each voice in our Urban Ecology Center family. Any time you tell your own special and particular Urban Ecology Center story, it can have a huge impact. So, tell it! You never know — you might be talking to someone from the EPA, or a future lawmaker, or our next big donor. Or even better — you might be talking to someone who just really needs a way to connect with nature in their neighborhood and you might be the one to open that door. The "best" story of the Urban Ecology Center is yours! 🌱



A Day of Discovery

by Chad Thomack, Environmental Educator

There are moments in a naturalist's career that are magical. You feel like you are in a famous science documentary. The narrator in your head starts to say, "That's when he discovered the most amazing..." but is cut off by the children surrounding you, giggling with excitement. As you snap back to reality, you think about just how lucky you are to be able to share your passion with these future environmental scientists. I had one of these moments during a new summer camp called "Animal Extravaganza."

The children gathered in the Citizen Science room after a full morning of learning about mammals and for some well needed lunch. Now it was time to take our studies out into Riverside Park. We hiked along looking for our furry friends. The campers stopped to point out squirrels and dogs and, although these were interesting, the children wanted more. The river is a good place for mammal

sightings so we headed to where I had seen deer, fox and coyote congregating in the past.

As we kept our eyes open for mammals, we entertained ourselves by looking at (and tossing) rocks in the river. Suddenly, a camper shouted. He had found a strange bug clinging to one of the stones! After further inspection, we determined it was a dragonfly larva. I had not seen one on land unless it was getting ready to leave the watery world below and become an adult dragonfly. Sure enough, the exoskeleton started to wiggle a bit and in a few minutes it split open down its back as its wings and body struggled to push out from the shell. All the children's eyes were glued to the show as the dragonfly emerged. A boy smiled at me and said, "I can't believe I am watching this happen!"

One of the girls took this insect eater of the sky with her on our hike so we could continue to watch the process unfold. Its

wings were all balled up but in minutes they expanded an inch. Just when we thought they were through stretching out, they grew a few centimeters more, its body did the same. How amazing to see this large bodied insect emerge from its small exoskeleton.

The campers watched our dragonfly dry off in the warm summer sun. But for me, the children watching in amazement was a more pleasing sight than the bug. The dry narrator in my head was replaced by a camper's voice saying, "If you wouldn't have let us play on the rocks, we might not have made this discovery."

What a proud and fun moment to be an educator. No doubt these moments of transformation in nature will help to transform the lives of the campers. Hopefully this experience will be the spark that ignites a love of being outdoors: exploring, learning and enjoying life. 🌱

NOVEMBER & DECEMBER

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

Saturday, December 21
at Riverside Park



**WINTER SOLSTICE
CANDLELIGHT WALK
FOR KIDS!**

Enjoy the wonder of a winter night with stories for kids on an easy walk through the woods. Then warm up inside with games and treats. Walks will leave every 15 minutes. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

4:30 - 6 p.m.

For families | Adults: \$5 (Nonmembers - \$7)
Children: \$3 (Nonmembers - \$5)



**WINTER SOLSTICE
CANDLELIGHT WALK**

Celebrate the Winter Solstice! Join us for a guided, candlelit walk through Riverside Park as we listen to poetry and readings of the season. Then warm up inside by the fire while you enjoy cider, snacks and music. Walks begin every fifteen minutes.

7 - 9 p.m.

For adults and teens | \$5 (Nonmembers: \$10)

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION PARTY and Annual Meeting

Join us for an evening to celebrate the mission of the Urban Ecology Center and all of the volunteers who have contributed to our accomplishments in the past year.

5:30-6:30pm

Enjoy delicious, heavy appetizers

6:30 - 7:00pm

Be inspired at our Annual Meeting and Year In Review

End the evening with entertainment by the staff and a dessert bar.

(RP) WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 20
5:30 - 7:30PM | FREE

HOLIDAY CLOSINGS & SPECIAL HOURS

RIVERSIDE PARK

November 28 - 29	Closed
December 23	9am - 5pm
December 24 - 25	Closed
December 26	9am - 5pm
December 30	9am - 5pm
December 31 - January 1	Closed

WASHINGTON PARK

November 28 - 30	Closed
December 24 - 25	Closed
December 26 - 28	1 - 4pm
December 31 - January 1	Closed

MENOMONEE VALLEY

November 28 - 30	Closed
December 24 - 25	Closed
December 26 - 28	1 - 4pm
December 31 - January 1	Closed

RIVERSIDE PARK



Put on your warm coat and boots, gather your family and come to the **Kid's Candlelight Walk** on December 21st from 4:30-6pm.

New this year, families can celebrate the Winter Solstice as they hear stories of the season appropriate for kids on a guided, candlelit walk. For those of you without kiddos, the **Candlelight Walk** that you know and love will still occur from 7-9pm. Now people of all ages can celebrate the Winter Solstice with us!

— *Jamie Ferschinger,*
Branch Manager - Riverside Park

WASHINGTON PARK



Ever wonder how to identify trees in winter? Come and learn how to identify trees once their most distinguishing feature, leaves, are no longer around. Make sure to bundle up and join us for **Winter Tree ID** on Saturday, November 16th from 11am - noon!

— *Willie Karidis,*
Branch Manager - Washington Park

MENOMONEE VALLEY



Learn all about the Valley's winter wildlife through our **Hibernacular Spectacular** or **City Wildlife** programs. Or, keep yourself outside and active by joining us for **Work Outside Wednesdays**. Prefer to be warm as winter starts? No problem; try out **The Zumba Experience**, **Ancestral Art** or our **Cooking Workshop: Five Veggies, 4 Ways!**

— *Glenna Holstein,*
Branch Manager - Menomonee Valley

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

Quick Guide

Highlighted Programs

Christmas Bird Counts

Join thousands of volunteers around the world for the annual Christmas Bird Count. Data we collect contribute to an international database researchers use to examine bird population trends.

East Side

We will hike north to Capitol Drive along the east bank of the Milwaukee River, stop for a quick brunch and return along the west bank. Please follow us to Lake Park in the afternoon for refreshments and more birding. Dress for a long hike and bring money for brunch.

(RP) Sat., Dec. 14 | 8am - 5pm
For adults and teens | Free - donations appreciated

West Side

We will meet at the Menomonee Valley branch and hike to the Washington Park branch with a stop for brunch along the way. Then we'll take a shuttle back to the Valley. Dress for a long hike and bring money for brunch.

(MV) Sat., Dec. 14 | 8am - 5pm
For adults and teens | Free - donations appreciated

Milwaukee Centennial Arboretum

Docent-Led Tours

Excited to explore the Milwaukee Rotary Centennial Arboretum? Then come on a tour led by one of our trained volunteer docents! You will learn about the history, ecology, and community involvement surrounding the creation and maintenance of this beautiful park.

(RP) Sat., Nov. 2 | 2 - 3pm
(RP) Wed., Nov. 6 | 11am - noon
(RP) Sat., Nov. 9 | 11am - noon
For everyone | Free - donations appreciated (Nonmembers: \$5)

Student Research Presentations

Learn what cool things our research interns and students have been up to. Each student will present a short summary of his/her research project conducted at the Center in 2013, including original research by the Young Scientists Club, studies of the state-threatened Butler's Gartersnake, park use surveys and more!

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

Hibernacular Spectacular

We will learn why animals hibernate and what adaptations they have to help them survive the winter. Then we will go outside and make our own hibernaculum!

(MV) Sat., Nov. 9 | 2 - 4pm
For everyone | Free - donations appreciated (Nonmembers: \$5)

Experiment Experience!

Perform some exciting foaming, floating or exploding experiments! Bring home a booklet of more experiments you can do at home.

(RP) Sat., Nov. 16 | 2 - 3:30pm
For families and children | Adults: \$6 (Nonmembers: \$9) Children: \$4 (Nonmembers: \$7)

Shapeshifter: The Changing States of Water

Join us for a hike to find ice crystals in the river. Then put on your lab coat and experiment with water.

(MV) Sat., Dec. 14 | 10 - 11:30am
For families with children ages 5 and older | \$5 (Nonmembers: \$7)

Chess Tournament

Children ages 7-16 will be randomly placed in brackets and play a series of games to determine the champion.

(WP) Sat., Dec. 14 | Noon - 4pm
For everyone | Free - donations appreciated

Ancestral Art

Come to find out how our ancestors created amazing art and create your own with all natural materials!

(MV) Sat., Dec. 14 | 2 - 3:30pm
For everyone | Free donations appreciated (Nonmembers: \$5)

Create Animal Ornaments

Come create some cool animal ornaments to decorate your room.

(RP) Sun., Dec. 15 | 2 - 4pm
For families and children | Adults: \$6 (Nonmembers: \$9) Children: \$4 (Nonmembers: \$7)

Walk Under the Solstice Moon

Join us on a night walk in the park. If there's snow, we'll snowshoe or ski.

(WP) Tue., Dec. 17 | 5 - 6pm
For adults and accompanied children | Adults: \$5 (Nonmembers: \$10) Children: Free - donations appreciated

Animal Feeding

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

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

Science Saturdays and Sundays

Theme for November and December is "Ways to Go from Here to There!"

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

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. through Dec. 19 except Nov. 28 | 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. through Dec. 20 except Nov. 28-29 | 4 - 6pm and Every Sat. through Dec. 21 except Nov. 30 | 1 - 4pm
For kids ages 7-12 | \$10 annual membership

(MV) Every Tue. & Thu. through Dec. 19 except Nov. 28 | 4 - 6pm and Every Sat. through Dec. 21 except Nov. 30 | 1 - 4pm
For ages 5-12 | \$10 annual membership

City Wildlife

Learn about the animals we've recorded through our Citizen Science research and then join us for a hike to find the critters that are right in our backyards!

(MV) Sat., Nov. 2 | 2 - 3:30pm
For everyone | Free - donations appreciated (Nonmembers: \$5 suggested donation)

Storytime in the Tipi

Enjoy the warmth of the fire in our rooftop tipi. Staff-led story time on the second Saturday of the month at 10:30am and 1:30pm

(RP) Sats. Nov. 9, 16, 23, 30, Dec. 14, 21 & 28 | 10am - 2pm
For everyone | Free - donations appreciated

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

Menomonee Valley Walking Tours ♿

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

Beesentations - Bees and Beekeeping Revealed ♿

(RP) Mon., Nov. 18 & Dec. 12 | 6 - 8pm
For adults | \$10 (Nonmembers: \$15)

Winter Tree ID

Come and learn how to identify trees once their most distinguishing feature is no longer around. Make sure to bundle up!

(WP) Sat., Nov. 16 | 10am - noon
For adults and teens | \$5 (Nonmembers: \$10)

From Beak To Tail:

All About the Life of Birds ♿

Join Tim Vargo, Manager of Research and Citizen Science, for an in-depth look into the wonders of bird ecology, conservation and behavior.

(RP) Sat., Nov. 2 | 3:30 - 5pm
(WP) Sat., Dec. 21 | 2 - 3:30pm
For adults | \$5 (Nonmembers: \$10)

Quick Vegetarian Indian Dishes ♿

In this hands-on class you will learn how to cook a few Indian favorites that are easy, quick and nutritious.

(RP) Mon., Nov. 4 | 6 - 8:30pm
For adults | \$35 (Nonmembers: \$40)
Registration required by Nov. 1, 5pm.

Fracking: How It Affects Your Neighborhood ♿

Speaker: Kimberlee Wright, Executive Director of Midwest Environmental Advocates.

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

Riverside Park Update and Community Forum ♿

Hear what is happening at the Riverside Park branch and give us some feedback about how we are doing. Snacks and good conversation provided. Hope to see you there!

(RP) Tue., Nov. 5 | 6 - 7:30pm
For everyone | Free - donations appreciated

The Zumba Experience!

Forget the workout, just lose yourself in the high-energy Latin and international beats with instructor Gema Diaz.

(MV) Wed., Nov. 6, 20, Dec. 4 & 18 | 5:30 - 6:30pm
Free for adults | Free - donations appreciated

Sustainable Coffee Tasting ♿

Join coffee experts from the MKE Coffee Guild to try some great coffee and learn about growing regions and sustainable farming practices.

(RP) Sat., Nov. 9 & Dec. 14 | 10 - 11am
For adults | \$8 (Nonmembers: \$10)

Food Preservation: Gift Preserves ♿

In this hands-on class we'll focus on creating unique preserves and other edible gifts, as well as discuss creative ways to wrap and decorate them.

(RP) Mon., Nov. 11 | 6 - 8:30pm
For adults | \$35 (Nonmembers: \$40)
Registration and payment required by Nov. 8.

Civil Rights History Made in Milwaukee

Author Margaret (Peggy) Rozga will discuss her new book *Justice, Freedom, Herbs* and her life as an activist.

(MV) Tue., Nov. 12 | 7 - 8:30pm
For adults | \$5 (Nonmembers: \$10)

Alberta's Oil Sands: A Visit to the Heart of the Industry

Speaker: Margaret Swedish. Learn about Alberta's oil sands, Wisconsin's role and how we can move toward a new energy future.

(RP) Sat., Nov. 16 | 10am - noon
For adults | Free - donations appreciated

Cooking Workshop: Five Veggies, Four Ways ♿

We'll use onions, garlic, bell peppers, carrots and cabbage to make main dishes from four different ethnic food traditions.

(MV) Sat., Nov. 16 | 11am - 1:30pm
For adults | \$30 (Nonmembers: \$35)

Faith and Ecology ♿

Facilitated by the Interfaith Earth Network.

(RP) Tue., Nov. 19 & Dec. 17 | 7 - 8:30pm
For adults | Free - donations appreciated

Milwaukee's HOME GR/OWN Initiative: Public Forum ♿

Join HOME GR/OWN Program Manager Tim McCollow to learn how this initiative will increase access to healthy foods in low-income neighborhoods.

(RP) Thu., Nov. 21 & Dec. 19 | 6:30 - 7:30pm
For everyone | Free - donations appreciated

Perfect Cup of Joe: Brew at Home Session ♿

Learn how to brew a perfect cup of coffee at home. MKE Coffee Guild will describe and demonstrate brewing equipment including Chemex, French Press, AeroPress and Pour Over.

(RP) Sat., Nov. 23 | 10 - 11:30am
For adults | \$8 (Nonmembers: \$10)

Photo Phenology ♿

This club meets each month to take photographs and draw pictures of the natural area around the Center. We hope to create a picture record to help us understand the way the Valley is changing and the factors at play.

(MV) Sat., Nov. 23 & Dec. 14 | 10 - 11:30am
For adults, teens and families
Free - donations appreciated

Weave a Pine Needle Ornament ♿

Create an ornament from pine needles! Instructor Linda Gaalaas is an experienced weaver and will teach you the simple techniques to create this wonderful craft. Supplies provided.

(RP) Sat., Dec. 7 | 9 - 11am
For adults and teens | \$30 (Nonmembers - \$35)
Registration is required by Dec. 5

Cooking Circle: Using the Whole Chicken ♿

Learn how to go beyond the breast and cook/use an entire chicken. In this hands-on class we'll create chicken salad, curry tacos, stock and more. Recipes and handouts will be provided.

(RP) Mon., Dec. 9 | 6 - 8:30pm
For adults and teens | \$30 (Nonmember: \$35)
Registration and payment is required by Dec. 6

Weave a Pine Needle Tray ♿

Learn how to coil pine needles into a decorative tray from long time weaver, Linda Gaalaas. All materials are provided. Registration required by December 12th.

(RP) Sat., Dec. 14 | 9am - 1pm
For adults and teens | \$30 (Nonmembers - \$35)

NOVEMBER						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

DECEMBER						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Get weekly emails about our programs!

THE WEEKLY GUIDE

Our Main email Newsletter
list of events for the coming week

THE WEEKLY R&R

Research & Restoration News
native plant and animal of the month

Sign up on our website
www.urbanecologycenter.org

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Quick Guide

Volunteer Orientation

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

(RP) Fri., Nov. 8 | 3 - 4:30pm

(RP) Thu., Nov. 14 | 5:30 - 7pm

(RP) Sat., Nov. 23 | 10:30am - noon

(RP) Fri., Dec. 6 | 3 - 4:30pm

(RP) Sat., Dec. 14 | 10:30am - noon

(WP) Sat., Nov. 9 | 10:30 - 11:30am

(WP) Fri., Nov. 22 | 4 - 5pm

(WP) Thu., Dec. 5 | 5 - 6pm

(WP) Tue., Dec. 17 | 4:30 - 5:30pm

(MV) Tue., Nov. 5 | 5:30 - 7pm

(MV) Sat. Nov. 16 | 10:30am - noon

(MV) Tue. Dec. 3 | 5:30 - 7pm

For adults and teens | Free - donations appreciated

Burdock Brigade

Help us restore our parks by removing exotic invasive plants and propagating and planting native species.

(WP) Every Thu. except Nov.

28 & Dec. 26 | 4 - 5:30pm

(RP) Every Tue. except

Dec. 24 | 9 - 11am

(RP) 1st & 3rd Sat. of the

month | 9:30 - 11am

For adults, families, and teens

Free - donations appreciated

Work Outside Wednesdays

Green up your thumbs in our native nursery or while you keep the Center's gardens looking great and welcoming to wildlife.

(MV) Every Wed. except

Dec. 25 | 2 - 4 pm

For adults, families and teens

Free - donations appreciated

Volunteer Papermaking

Feeling creative? Join other Center volunteers and learn the art of recycled papermaking to create beautiful gifts for our Center's supporters.

(RP) Every Thu. except Nov.

28 & Dec. 26 | 4 - 6pm

For adults and teens | Free -

donations appreciated

Forestry Fridays

Help us improve the health of our forests in the Milwaukee Rotary Centennial Arboretum.

(RP) Every Fri. except

Nov. 29 | 2 - 4 pm

For adults, families and teens

Free - donations appreciated

Park Ranger Crew

Join other volunteers and walk through the park picking up trash and noting any maintenance needs.

(WP) Every Sat. except Nov.

30 & Dec. 28 | 9 - 10 am

(MV) Every Sat. except Nov.

30 & Dec. 28 | 11am - Noon

For adults, families, and teens

Free - donations appreciated

INTEREST GROUPS

Menomonee Valley Astronomy Club

Kick off the newest club in the Menomonee Valley! Telescopes and fun crafts available for all ages.

Constellations

(MV) Tue., Nov. 12 | 7 - 8:30pm

For everyone | Free - donations appreciated

Planets

(MV) Tue., Dec. 10 | 7 - 8:30pm

For everyone | Free - donations appreciated

Photo Club

(RP) Thu., Nov. 7 &

Dec. 5 | 6:30 - 9pm

Friends of Real Food

From a Cabin in the Woods to Rusty Bend Farms

(RP) Wed., Nov. 13 | 6 - 8pm

Topic TBA

(RP) Wed., Dec. 10 | 6 - 8pm

For adults | Free - donations appreciated

Urban Echo Poets

(RP) Thu., Nov. 14 & Dec.

12 | 7 - 8:30pm

Urban Stargazers

(RP) Thu., Nov. 14 & Dec.

12 | 7 - 8:30pm

Transition Milwaukee:

All City Hub Meeting

(RP) Mon., Nov. 25 | 6:30 - 8:30pm

Early Morning Birdwalks

(MV) Every Tue. except

Dec. 24 & 31 | 8am

(WP) Every Wed. except

Dec. 25 & Jan. 1 | 8am

(RP) Every Thu. except Nov.

28, Dec. 26 & Jan. 2 | 8am

URBAN ADVENTURES

Wild Edibles Foraging

Discover the diversity of food available in the city as we search Riverside Park for nuts, berries, roots and seeds.

(RP) Sun., Nov. 3 | 1 - 3pm

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

Nature at Night

Discover how people and animals adapt to darkness and the amazing things that happen outside at night on this guided walk through the park.

(RP) Mon., Nov. 18 or Fri.,

Dec. 13 | 6 - 7pm

For everyone | Adults: \$5

(Nonmembers: \$7) Children:

\$3 (Nonmembers - \$5)

DIY Stick and Snow Fort

Learn how to build shelters to protect you from the elements. We'll cover a few basic shelter designs and then head into Riverside Park to make our forts out of sticks, snow and other available materials. Dress for the weather.

(RP) Sun. Dec. 1 | 1 - 3pm

For adults and accompanied children

Adults: \$10 (Nonmembers: \$12)

Children \$8 (Nonmembers: \$10)

BRANCH HOLIDAY SCHEDULES

Thinking about visiting the Urban Ecology Center over the holidays? Fantastic! Please be aware of our holiday schedule open hours so you'll be assured of a great visit.

All Urban Ecology Center branches will be closed November 28 - 29, December 24 - 25 and December 31 - January 1.

Please see page 5 for branch specific holiday hours.

And remember, all of the parks surrounding the Center branches are open 7 days a week so even if we aren't open, you can still enjoy the outdoors!



What's Happening at Washington Park

by Willie Karidis, Branch Manager - Washington Park

With the big events that have been happening in Riverside Park and in the Menomonee Valley, it's easy to lose track of the fantastic things happening at Washington Park. To catch everyone up, I thought it best to check in with some of the folks who are helping to make it all happen.

Tim Vargo, bird magnet and Manager of Research and Citizen Science, had this to say about a wonderful tradition he leads every Wednesday morning:

"This week marked the 350th weekly bird walk at Washington Park (for real, I just checked!). The weekly bird volunteers have tallied over 150 species since the walks started in 2007, including some rare gems like a summer tanager, a northern mockingbird, a lark sparrow and an osprey fishing koi out of the lagoon."

Terrance Davis has been working with us for over a year as the Visitor Services Specialist. He is the first person who will greet you when you walk through our doors. Terrance had this to say about the benefits of membership with the Urban Ecology Center — specifically about our lending program:

"To sum it all up in one word, Awesome! That's the word I choose to use when describing the Winter Equipment Lending benefit at the Urban Ecology Center. Just when you thought all of the fun had to come to an end because the summer was over - surprise, our members can borrow cross country skis and ice skates! We also have snowshoes and ice fishing

equipment (for you die-hard fisherpersons). So please join the Center and start borrowing equipment today. Or better yet, give a gift membership and get outside with your friends!"

Our Community Programs staff always has an interesting story about our highly motivated Young Scientist Club members. **Rachel Soika**, our newly hired Community Program Educator (hooray!) had this to say:

"After wrapping up our research for the day, the Driven to Discover group and I were chilling on the hill when a spontaneous 'Bird-off' (a bird id challenge) began. Never have I been more willing to use my phone to find pictures of birds and stump them just once!"

Kirsten Maier, who is serving a one year volunteer position through the Lutheran Volunteer Corps has been similarly impressed:

"Imagine: six young scientists, two High School Outdoor Leaders and two community program educators standing next to a dying oak tree discussing what might happen when the tree finally falls. Isaiah stops us. "Wait," he says, "do we want the tree to die or not?" Good question, young scientist. Good question."

Emily Michi, our Volunteer Coordinator, reflected upon one of the many corporate groups who have graced us with their presence over this past summer:

"It is going to be BIG! No matter how many times I mentioned this at the staff meetings

leading up to August 21st, I am not sure I was able to put into perspective what exactly was going to happen during the six hours the many talented GE project leads had planned. GE Healthcare Community Service Day is an annual opportunity for GE Healthcare to give back to the local community. Over 80 volunteers spent the day transforming our Washington Park branch.

They did a tremendous amount of work in only six hours. Some of their accomplishments were:

- Designing and installing a wooden random block wall that includes shelves for live plants!
- Building four custom, cedar-clad fish tank stands
- Planting more than 300 prairie flowers
- Creating a walkway of 40 stepping stones
- Installing over 40 feet of cedar wainscoting
- Painting a 24-foot mural depicting Washington Park past and present
- Building a wattle fence (woven wood fencing) more than 120 feet long

I was blown away with their dedication and cannot put into words how grateful I am for all of their hard work."

This is just the tip of the iceberg. So much is happening here in Washington Park it is hard to tell you everything. I guess you'll just have to stop by and see for yourself! Hope to see you 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.

Getting a gift for a special someone this year?

You could *buy* them a canoe, kayak, ice skates, snow shoes, skis, a 6-person tent with sleeping bags, bicycle, bocce ball set, a fishing pole and tackle box, tennis racquets, a wheelbarrow, a post-hole digger and a pitchfork.

— OR —

Give them a Gift Membership to the Urban Ecology Center and they could *borrow* all of all those things and more!

Only

<u>FAMILY</u>	<u>INDIVIDUAL</u>	<i>a year!</i>
\$35	\$25	

Visit urbanecologycenter.org/gift-membership

Together, We are an Ocean

Continued from page 1

catfish, though last Sunday we got some nice blue gills bigger than my hand. Just found this spot last week. It's perfect! Someone has been doing some real nice work around here. My name is Reggie, pleasure to meet you, and that's my friend Antwan. We've been fishing down here for close to 20 years. We love what they are doing to this land. Real pretty, easy to get to, and I swear the fishing has improved ten times what it used to be!"

There is nothing more satisfying than hearing the impact of your hard work, unsolicited and without, pretense through someone else's eyes. Reggie had no idea that he was talking to the "someone" and a significant member of the "they" that he was referring to. It almost made me cry!

When I got back to my office I heard of another experience, one that really did make me cry. Carijean, an employee since almost the beginning of the Center, rolled into my office with a warm smile and shared this experience.

"You wouldn't believe what I did today! I was wheeling around in the Arboretum when I spied a path down to the river. I took it just to see how far it would go and I made it to the North Avenue Bridge ... alone! It was beautiful. I've never been so close to the river. On my way back I ran into someone else in a wheelchair enjoying the same "first time" experience. I don't even know what to say."

Carijean has edited stories about explorations along the river for years, but only now, since the truly accessible trails are complete with the opening of the Milwaukee Rotary Centennial Arboretum, can she join the rest of us in this magical sanctuary.

I love moments like this! It's what we do to heal the land that results in these unguided, spontaneous experiences in nature. It's taken years of effort by hundreds of people ... and it's working!

Recovering from this happy emotional moment, I open my email to ...

Hello Mr. Leinbach,

I am writing you to acknowledge Terrance Davis, one of your employees at the Washington Park location. I called the Center today to inquire about where I could find milkweed, because my daughter needed to study it for a science assignment. Not only was he extremely prompt at getting back to me, he also proactively spoke to me about the benefits of membership. My children have both been on field-trips to the Urban Ecology Center, but until now, I did not realize that membership was available and offered so many perks.

Mr. Davis was so enthusiastic over the phone that when I went to Washington Park to

find the milkweed, I decided to purchase a family membership. Mr. Davis was extremely knowledgeable and passionate about the Urban Ecology Center, and my daughters were very excited about our decision.

Sincerely,

Rita

What an amazing end to a wonderful day!

We talk a lot about the impact the Urban Ecology Center has on our kids, but Dana, Reggie, Carijean and Rita are just as important as the students we serve and the impact our Center has on them is just as profound.

Are you a volunteer who has given your time, talent or ideas to this important mission in the city? If so, I thank you. Are you a member or supporter? I hope so and we extend the deepest gratitude to you.

Have you introduced someone you know to this community recently? If not, now is a great time to do so. The more people engaged, the more fun we can have and the larger the impact in the world will be realized!

As the quote says, "Individually, we are one drop. Together, we are an ocean!" 🌊

Annual Meeting is November 20th!

Join us on November 20th for our Volunteer Appreciation Party and Annual Meeting, an evening of food and fun as we celebrate our year, share our future plans and thank our wonderful volunteers for the tremendous work they do (see page 5 for details). Among those volunteers being recognized are members of the Urban Ecology Center Board of Directors. We thank them for the vision and leadership they provide.

We'd like to thank the following Directors who have graciously agreed to serve another two-year term: **Jennifer Bolger-Breceda, Pete Campbell, Monique Charlier, Derek Deubel, Danni Gendelman, Dennis Grzezinski, Troy Hilliard, Jim Schleif and Mary Witte.**

We would also like to recognize nine new Directors we will ask our membership to approve: **Penny Cruse, David Froiland,**

Ed Hammond, Jennifer Mattes, Antoine McDuffie, Josh Morby, Molly Schissler, Jeff Spence and Dan Van Housen.

Last, we'd like to recognize Director **Bill Rumpf** who is leaving the Board. The entire Urban Ecology Center family thanks you for your service, dedication and wisdom. You will be missed. 🌊

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 2971 members and many in-kind donors the Center serves over 199,000 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

Riverside Park

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

Hours of operation:
See Holiday Schedule on page 5
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

See Holiday Schedule on page 5
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

See Holiday Schedule on page 5
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 give a donation, join or renew your membership securely online? Visit urbanecologycenter.org and click either "donations" or "membership."

Renew or begin your membership, choose one:

Individual (\$25) includes guest Family (\$35) Student (\$12)

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:

Individual (\$25) includes guest Family (\$35) Student (\$12)

Recipient Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Day Phone _____ Eve. _____

Email _____

Send the announcement card to Me Gift recipient

Occasion _____ Deliver by _____

DONATION (in addition to membership)

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)
- 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 _____

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

Saturday, December 21
at Riverside Park

**WINTER SOLSTICE
CANDLELIGHT WALK
FOR KIDS!**
Enjoy the wonder of a winter night with stories for kids on an easy walk through the woods. Then warm up inside with games and treats. Walks will leave every 15 minutes. Children must be accompanied by an adult.
4:30 - 6 p.m.
For families | Adults: \$5 (Nonmembers - \$7)
Children: \$3 (Nonmembers - \$5)

**WINTER SOLSTICE
CANDLELIGHT WALK**
Celebrate the Winter Solstice! Join us for a guided, candlelit walk through Riverside Park as we listen to poetry and readings of the season. Then warm up inside by the fire while you enjoy cider, snacks and music. Walks begin every fifteen minutes.
7 - 9 p.m.
For adults and teens | \$5 (Nonmembers: \$10)

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION PARTY
and Annual Meeting

(RP) WEDNESDAY,
NOVEMBER 20
5:30 - 7:30PM | FREE

FSC logo

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By Beth Heller

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by Chad Thomack

**WHAT'S HAPPENING AT
WASHINGTON PARK**

By Willie Karidis

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



3,192
VOLUNTEERS
contributed
OVER
20,000
HOURS
in our 2012-13 fiscal year!