



We're in it Together

by Beth Heller, Senior Director of Education and Strategic Planning

It was a crisp autumn day - perfect for a bicycle commute - and I was using my lunch hour to pedal between the Center's branches. Zipping downhill on Highland Boulevard toward MillerCoors, I hit a big bump that popped my chain out of gear, jamming it so that the pedals would no longer crank. I coasted to a stop and within a few seconds was surrounded by three Harley-Davidson-attired gentlemen. Before I could utter a greeting, one asked if they could help. I nodded yes and within 30 seconds the chain was back in place. We exchanged a few pleasantries and off I went to continue my day, noting how nice it would be to arrive back at work without greasy fingers.

Throughout the rest of the day, my mind kept wandering back to that moment. It was quite amazing, actually. My Harley buddies barely said a word to each other as they each took on a task. One offered me a hand as I dismounted and steadied the front of the bike. Another held the back of the bike and lifted it when it came time to test the repair work so the tire could spin. The third released and repositioned the grimy chain and turned the pedal when it came time to verify all was fixed. It was as though they had rehearsed their actions to a point of near perfection. So, how did these three people coordinate effortlessly without having a discussion?

As I shared this story with my colleagues, one person pointed out that Harley riders have developed a culture where they will always stop for a biker who needs help. While I am no motorcycle mechanic, I am pretty certain that there are different and more complex steps to repairing a Harley. But there is a strong sense of "we're in it together." That was it. That was the vibe I was trying to identify that came so easily and naturally to these men.

We're in it together.

Sure, I could have fixed my own chain. But it would have taken three times as long. And I know from experience that it can be tricky to lift the back wheel while cranking the pedal to confirm that the chain is properly set - typically I skip this step, risking a new jam. Thank you, Harley buddies!

We're in it together.

That simple idea not only brought a smile to my face and saved a few minutes of time, but it created a vibe that stayed with me.

As I pondered this, I realized that this vibe is one of my favorite aspects of being a part of the Urban Ecology Center community. Our contributing members and volunteers remind us every day that we're not doing this important work alone. Volunteers contributed nearly half a million dollars worth of their time to the work of the Center last year. Everyone on staff has a story of when someone in our community has stepped forward at a critical moment to offer support.

Imagine what could be achieved if everyone truly held themselves to this understanding. What would happen to crime, segregation, oppression, pollution or exploitation if, instead of thinking "what's in it for me," we thought "we're in it together." It can be a powerful way of thinking - graceful, efficient, heart-warming.

We are surrounded by people who understand that we are all in it together.

It isn't hard to approach life's challenges this way. Whether working with one person or thousands, giving one dollar or millions, the approach works. So, in this season of thankfulness, let's celebrate. We're in it together and together we can make a difference. 🍀



Hi, it's me, Ken!

I'm thinking about what to give to the special people in my life during this giving season and what I want to know is...

🎵 "What does the fox say?" 🎵

(find out on page six)

Branch Highlights

📍 RIVERSIDE PARK

After 10 years underfoot, the watershed painted on the floor in our lobby has become weathered. This year it's getting refreshed! As a result, the Riverside Park branch will be closed December 29 - January 2 as the floor is refinished. Visit our other branches to borrow equipment or relax with a cup of cocoa.

📍 WASHINGTON PARK

Thanks to a strong partnership with Milwaukee County Parks, earlier this year we expanded our lease to include the entire building at Washington Park. Through public input sessions, community members have helped create a vision for the space. Want to join in? Come in and fill out a survey at the Center.

📍 MENOMONEE VALLEY

Three Bridges Park takes on a totally different character in winter. It's amazing to meander among snow-covered hills in the middle of the city. Look for animal tracks and find out who else is using the park! If you're feeling adventurous, borrow our skis or snowshoes and leave some cool tracks of your own!

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

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Volunteer Appreciation Party and Annual Meeting

Come celebrate our volunteers and all that they have helped us accomplish this year.

5 - 6PM

Fun outdoor and indoor staff-led activities

6 - 7PM

Enjoy a delicious arrangement of heavy appetizers

7 - 7:30PM

End the evening with the annual meeting, entertainment by the staff and a dessert bar

(RP) Wed., Nov. 12 | 5 - 7:30PM

For adults and teens | Free - donations appreciated

Please RSVP by November 5th

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. Registration not required.

(RP) Sat., Dec. 20 | 7 - 9PM

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

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.

(RP) Sat., Dec. 20 | 4:30 - 6:30PM

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

Christmas Bird Count



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.

Join us on the east or west side of town! *Dress for a long hike and bring money for brunch.*

(RP) & (MV) Sat., Dec. 20 | 8AM - 5PM

For adults and teens
Free - donations appreciated

EAST SIDE

Meet at the Riverside Park branch and hike to Capitol Drive along the east bank of the river, stop for a quick brunch and return along the west bank. Follow us and join the Lake Park birders that afternoon.

WEST SIDE

Meet at the Menomonee Valley branch and hike to the Washington Park branch with a stop for brunch along the way. After, we'll take a shuttle back to the Valley.

An Evening of Folk & Jazz with Claudia Schmidt

(RP) Sat., Nov. 22 | 7:30 - 9:30PM

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

Claudia Schmidt is a powerful vocalist and adventurous artist, who combines lively music with rich poetry and playful humor. Mixing folk, jazz, traditional ballads and breathtaking originals, there's not a style she can't master. Claudia's incredible voice and charismatic stage presence make her a marvel in concert. Support the Urban Ecology Center and enjoy this seasonally inspired concert. To learn more about Claudia visit www.claudiaschmidt.com

RIVERSIDE PARK



We are really excited to offer some great programs in November and December! Join us for two very special guest lectures, **Biomimicry: Learning from Nature for Business**

Innovation with Taryn Mead, and Medicinal Plants of Israel with Zohara Yaniv-Bachrach. Be entertained by captivating music at the **Claudia Schmidt Benefit Concert.** Have a down home good time at the **Bluegrass Pie Swap!** And don't forget our winter favorites, the **Christmas Bird Count** and **Candlelight Walk.**

— Jamie Ferschinger,
Branch Manager - Riverside Park

WASHINGTON PARK



Early sunsets in winter make it the perfect time of year for stargazing with your kids! Join us on December 19th for an evening of **Stargazing at Blue Heron Wildlife Sanctuary** in Saukville and we'll get you and your kids back before bed time (well, maybe just a little bit late). For the adults, a couple of our staff's avid home brewers are excited to teach you about their favorite pastime at our **Home Brewing Basics series.**

— Erick Anderson,
Community Program Coordinator -
Washington Park

MENOMONEE VALLEY



Come to the Valley to enjoy the end of fall harvest with **Stone Soup** or **Gorgeous Gourds.** Or, welcome in winter with **Sledding the Slopes of the Menomonee Valley!** We have a few days that we are closed or have shortened hours for the holidays, so make sure you check the calendar when you're planning your visit. But Three Bridges Park will be open to enjoy every day!

— Glenna Holstein,
Branch Manager - Menomonee Valley

Quick Guide

Highlighted Programs

Medicinal Plants of Israel: Science and Traditions

Co-sponsored by the Milwaukee Jewish Federation

Zohara Yaniv-Bachrach, professor emeritus from Israel, will emphasize the historical role of medicinal plants and the rich ethnobotanical traditions of Israel that highlight the cultural connections between Biblical traditions and modern times. Samples of herbal tea will be available.

(RP) Mon., Nov. 3 | 7 - 8PM
For adults | Free - donations appreciated

Bluegrass Pie Swap

Come show your stuff! Bring pairs of homemade pies of the same kind (min. two pies) – one is for tasting at the event and one to swap with someone else. There will be an award for “best pie”, live bluegrass music and more! Limited number of spaces available for those who do not bring pies. Registration is required.

(RP) Thu., Nov. 20 | 6 - 8PM
For adults | Free, two pie minimum (Nonmembers: \$5, two pie minimum) | Pie-less member: \$7 (Pie-less nonmember: \$10). Pie-less participants contact Mike Ziegler, mziegler@urbanecologycenter.org to register

Biomimicry: Learning from Nature for Business Innovation

Co-sponsored by the Victory Garden Initiative

As the role and responsibilities of business in society continue to shift, many business leaders are turning to an unlikely source of inspiration: nature. Taryn Mead will explore case studies in the application of biological inspiration (referred to as biomimicry) for innovative solutions in business planning, operations and even economies.

(RP) Thu., Dec. 4 | 7 - 8:30PM
For adults and teens | Free - donations appreciated

Family Stargazing at Blue Heron

Take advantage of the early sunset and explore the planets and constellations visible at Blue Heron Wildlife Sanctuary in Saukville. Transportation provided.

(WP) Fri., Dec. 19 | 6 - 8:30PM
For adults and accompanied children ages 4 and older | Adults: \$10 (Nonmembers: \$12) Children: \$8 (Nonmembers: \$10)

Snakes of the World

Meet some snakes up close! Join local herpetologist Cheryl Sterrenburg for a fun, hands-on presentation about snake species from around the world!

(MV) Sat., Nov. 1 | Noon - 1PM
For everyone | Free - donations appreciated

Gorgeous Gourds

Have a great time with gourds! We will have an open studio for painting pumpkins, carving pumpkins and looking at the history of gourds in human culture.

(MV) Sat., Nov. 1 | drop in program 10AM - 4PM
For everyone | Free - donations appreciated

Toddling Into Nature:

Animals Getting Ready for Winter

We will discover ways that animals survive the cold. Dress for the weather. Register by November 15th.

(RP) Thu., Nov. 20 | 10 - 11:30AM
For families with children ages 3-5 | \$5/child (Nonmembers: \$7/child)

Stone Soup!

Celebrate the season by cooking stone soup! We will share stories, read the folktale of stone soup and enjoy arts and crafts while sipping hot apple cider. All ingredients provided.

(MV) Sat., Nov. 22 | 10AM - 12:30PM
For everyone | Adults: \$6 (Nonmembers: \$9) Children: \$4 (Nonmembers: \$7)

Fire and Ice!

Join the Young Scientist Club for an inquiry into the three states of matter. We will conclude with treats around our fire pit!

(MV) Thu., Dec. 11 | 4 - 6PM
For families with children 5 to 12 years old | Free for Young Scientist Club members (Nonmembers: \$5)

Fire Time in the Rooftop Tipi

Enjoy the warmth and light of the fire in our rooftop tipi on these cold, winter days.

(RP) Every Sat. except Nov. 29 & Dec. 20 | drop in program 10AM - 3PM
For everyone | Free - donations appreciated

Animal Feeding

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

(RP) **(WP)** & **(MV)** Every Sat. except Nov. 29 | 1PM
For everyone | Free - donations appreciated

Science Saturdays and Sundays

Come try these self-led activities and explore “Kids in Space!”

(RP) Self-led, drop-in activities available every Sat. except Nov. 29 | 10AM - 4PM and every Sun. except Nov. 30 | 1 - 4PM
For everyone | Free

Nature Rangers

Investigate animals and plants, learn about science, create research projects and more! Sign up for either the Monday or Tuesday session. Theme: “Surrounded by Science.” The fee covers November and December.

(RP) Every Mon. or every Tue. except Dec. 29-30 | 4 - 5:30PM
For children ages 5 and older | \$10 (Nonmember: \$15)

Young Scientists Club

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

(WP) Every Tue. - Fri. except Nov. 27, Dec. 23-26 & Dec. 30-Jan. 1 | 4 - 6PM and Every Sat. except Nov. 29 | 1 - 4PM
For kids ages 7-12 | \$10 annual membership

(MV) Every Tue. & Thu. except Nov. 27, Dec. 23-25 & Dec. 30-Jan. 1 | 4 - 6PM and Every Sat. | 1 - 4PM
For ages 5-12 | \$10 annual membership

HOMESCHOOL SERIES

Homeschool Series:

Winter Adaptations

It's going to be a cold harsh winter. We can grab a blanket or turn up the heater in our homes, but how do animals deal with this drop in temperature? We will look into the adaptations animal groups use to survive a Wisconsin winter.

Avian Migration

(WP) Tue., Nov. 11 | 1 - 3PM

Reptilian Hibernation

(MV) Tue., Nov. 25 | 1 - 3PM

Mammalian Activity

(RP) Tue., Dec. 9 | 1 - 3PM
For children ages 5 and older | \$7 (Nonmembers: \$10) per class

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

Quick Guide

Throwback Series

September marked the 10-year anniversary of the grand opening of our Riverside Park building. To honor this benchmark, we have lined up 10 months' worth of "throwback" community programming (plus a bonus program because, well, why not?) that we are reviving from the past ten years with new twists! Visit urbanecologycenter.org/10years to see a listing of all our Throwback programs.

Hike Through History: River to Lake Walk

Join friends and neighbors for a 4-mile fall walk from the Milwaukee River to Lake Michigan. Along the way you'll hear stories telling of the changes to this community, land and waters. The walk will end at Collectivo Lakefront Café with time to enjoy a warm beverage and each other's company (beverages not included in fee). Transportation back to Riverside Park will be available. *This "throwback" program was last seen in 2004.*

(RP) Sat., Nov. 15 | 9AM - NOON
For adults | \$5 (Nonmembers: \$7)

Cheesy Packer Party

Eat good cheese, meet new people and cheer on the Pack as they take on the Buffalo Bills! Bring your favorite cheese to share and we'll provide additional snacks. We'll also have some games, activities and contests to add to the fun! *This "throwback" program was last seen in 2008.*

(RP) Sun., Dec. 14 | NOON - 3PM
For families | Adults: \$5 (Nonmembers: \$7)
Children: \$3 (Nonmembers: \$5)

Basics of Home Brewing Series

There's a fascinating science behind the bottle of your favorite beer. We will explore the natural process of fermentation and how we can use our knowledge of that process to create delicious brews! In this two-session series, we will brew a batch of ale together. The price includes four bottles of finished beer. For adults age 21 and over. Fee is for both sessions. Session 1: Brewing equipment, recipes, preparation and fermentation. Session 2: Bottling and aging.

(WP) Sat., Nov. 15 &
Dec. 13 | 10AM - NOON
For adults age 21 and older |
\$20 (Nonmembers: \$30)

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. This is an ongoing series you can jump into at any point. The program features a lecture, discussion and a dusk walk. Beginning through advanced birders welcome. Binoculars provided.

(MV) Sat., Nov. 8 | 2:30 - 4PM &
(RP) Sat., Dec. 13 | 2 - 3:30PM
For adults | \$5 (Nonmembers: \$10)

Sustainable Coffee Tasting

Enjoy your morning coffee with us! Join coffee experts from the MKE Coffee Guild as you taste locally-roasted coffee from around the world. We will explore how local roasters bring out flavors unique to the beans' origin. Learn about the growing regions, sustainable farming practices, coffee notes, aromas and more. For all coffee enthusiasts! Space is limited.

(RP) Sat., Nov. 8 &
Dec. 13 | 10 - 11AM
For adults | \$5 (Nonmembers: \$7)

Basic Knife Skills

If the thought of slicing and dicing all those fresh local vegetables prevents you from cooking from scratch, come and learn how to "sharpen" your basic knife skills. Trained chef Annie Wegner LeFort will demonstrate basic cutting techniques as well as discuss selection and care of knives for food preparation. Sign up today to "hone" your skills.

(RP) Mon., Nov. 17 | 7 - 8PM
For adults | \$10 (Nonmembers: \$15)

Menomonee Valley Walking Tours

(MV) Every 1st Wed. of the month | 10 - 11AM
For adults | Free - donations appreciated

Research Lecture Series

Learn thought provoking research results at our 2014-2015 Research Lecture Series. Visit urbanecologycenter.org/lectures for full list of programs.

Refresh Milwaukee:

Milwaukee's Sustainability Plan

Refresh Milwaukee Sustainability Plan identifies measurable goals and targets across eight issue areas: buildings, energy, food, human capital, land and urban ecosystems, mobility, resource recovery and water in our city. It also features two catalytic projects. City of Milwaukee Sustainability Director Matt Howard will provide a general overview of the plan and an update of its implementation.

(MV) Mon., Nov. 10 | 7 - 8:30PM
For adults | \$5 (Nonmembers: \$10)

Student Research Presentations

Meet the student and volunteer researchers who conduct scientific projects using our parks and learn their discoveries. Topics include an analysis of migration timing changes of birds, results of our park use surveys and original research by the Young Scientists Club.

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

HOLIDAY CLOSINGS & SPECIAL HOURS

Normal hours apply except for days listed below

MENOMONEE VALLEY		WASHINGTON PARK		RIVERSIDE PARK	
November 27 - 30	Closed	November 27 - 30	Closed	November 27 - 30	Closed
December 23 - 25	Closed	December 23 - 25	Closed	December 22 - 23	9AM - 5PM
December 26 - 27, 30-31	noon - 4PM	December 26 - 27, 30-31	NOON - 4PM	December 24 - 25	Closed
December 30 - January 1	Closed	December 30 - January 1	Closed	December 26	9AM - 5PM
				December 29 - January 2	Closed

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

Snow and Go Group

Sign up for our spontaneous "Snow and Go," Group to enjoy active winter fun with the Urban Ecology Center community.

Knowing when Wisconsin's snow will fall is difficult to determine, but having fun in that snow is not!

When snow conditions are too perfect to stay indoors, you will receive an email notifying you of a spontaneous winter recreation program — sledding, snowshoeing, cross country skiing, making snow angels — whatever the snow calls for!

Programs will be on a 48 hour notice and details for place, activity and payment information will be contained in the email. Depending on the snow fall this year, we will try to schedule programs for both adults and families.

To be on our Snow and Go Group list, just send an email with "Snow and Go" in the subject line to mziegler@urbanecologycenter.org.

Celebrate the spontaneity of the snowfall! (All recreational equipment can be provided or bring your own).

Martial Arts with Above the Clouds

Hosted by Above the Clouds

This class teaches kids and teens respect, discipline, physical awareness, integrity and self-confidence. No experience needed! For more information, visit abovethecloudsmilwaukee.com.

(MV) Wed., Nov. 5 | 5:15 - 6:15PM
For youth ages 9-15 | Free - donations appreciated | Register on their website or at the door

Family Fall Hike

Washington Park is stunning in the autumn with beautiful red leaves of the sugar maples and diverse migratory birds. Join us for a walk as we explore seasonal changes and the science behind them.

(WP) Sat., Nov. 1 | 10 - 11:30AM
For adults and accompanied children | Adults: \$6 (Nonmembers: \$9) Children: \$4 (Nonmembers: \$7)

Full Moon Cross Country Ski

Join us each full moon this winter for a cross country skiing adventure through a serene, snow covered woods turned purple under the full moon's light. Locations will change with each moon, but all will be beautiful. Come along — howling is encouraged! Some cross country skiing experience required. Meet at our Riverside Park branch. Equipment and transportation provided. This program is weather dependent.

(RP) Sat., Dec. 6 | 5 - 8PM
For adults with some cross country skiing experience | \$10 (Nonmembers: \$15)

Sledding the Slopes of Menomonee Valley

Join us for a morning of snow and sledding followed by Aztec Hot Chocolate and stories by the fireplace. The perfect winter activity!

(MV) Sat., Dec. 20 | 10 - 11:30AM
For everyone | Free - donations appreciated

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Volunteer Orientation

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

(RP) Fri., Nov. 7 | 3 - 4:30PM
(RP) Sat., Nov. 22 | 10:30am - NOON
(RP) Sat., Dec. 13 | 10:30am - NOON

(WP) Thu., Nov. 13 | 4:30 - 5:30PM
(WP) Tue., Nov. 25 | 5 - 6PM
(WP) Tue., Dec. 16 | 5 - 6PM

(MV) Tue., Nov. 4 | 5 - 6:30PM
(MV) Tue., Nov. 18 | 5 - 6:30PM
(MV) Thu., Dec. 4 | 5 - 6:30PM

For adults and teens | Free - donations appreciated

Weekly volunteer opportunities

Find these weekly events on the calendar on our website

Burdock Brigades	Forestry Fridays	Volunteer Park Ranger Crews
Dig it, Plant it, Grow it	Volunteer Papermaking	

Fixin' Facilities

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

(RP) Every Wed. except Dec. 24 & 31 | 3 - 5PM
For adults, families and teens | Free - donations appreciated

Youth Project Squad

Help us keep our facility running smoothly. Work on projects and learn new skills with our staff.

(MV) Sats., Nov. 1 & Dec. 6 | NOON - 2PM
(MV) Thus., Nov. 20 & Dec. 18 | 4 - 6PM
For adults and teens | Free - donations appreciated

INTEREST GROUPS

Photo Club

(RP) Thus., Nov. 6 & Dec. 4 | 6:30 - 9PM

Friends of Real Food: Potluck Dinner and Program

(RP) Weds., Dec. 10 | 6 - 8PM

350.org General Meeting

(RP) Tues., Nov. 11 & Dec. 9 | 7 - 8:30PM
For everyone | Free - donations appreciated

Faith and Ecology

(RP) Tues., Nov. 18 & Dec. 16 | 7 - 8:30PM

Urban Echo Poets

(RP) Thus., Nov. 13 & Dec. 11 | 7 - 8:30PM

Urban Stargazers

(RP) Thus., Nov. 13 & Dec. 11 | 7 - 8:30PM

Transition Milwaukee:

All City Hub Meeting
(RP) Mons., Nov. 24 | 6:30 - 8:30PM

Early Morning Birdwalks

(MV) Every Tue. | 8am
(WP) Every Wed. | 8am
(RP) Every Thu. except Nov. 27 & Dec. 25 | 8am

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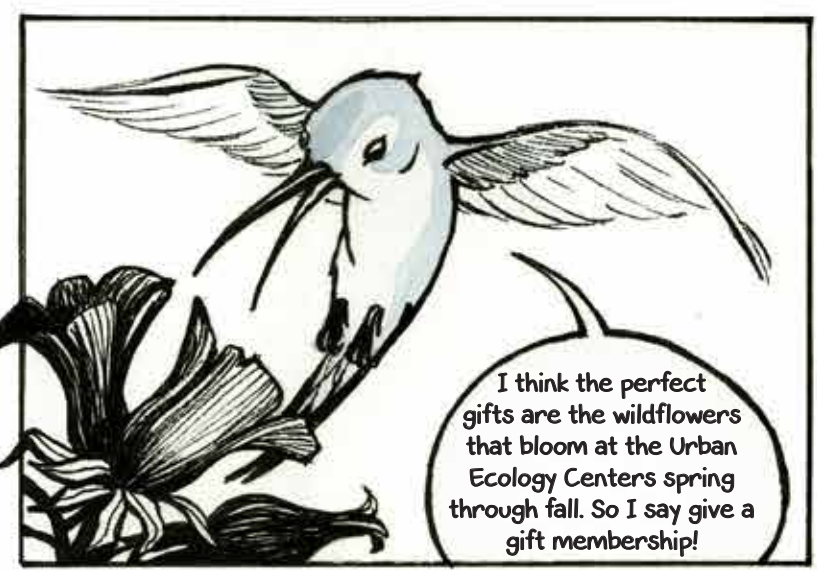


The Greatest Gift!

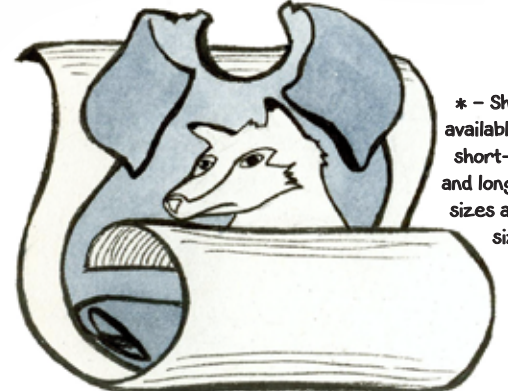
"What does the fox say?"

Story by Ken Leinbach

Illustration by Aaron Boyd



During this holiday season, whatever you decide to get for the important people in your life, try wrapping it up with this page ... Turtle's idea of an Urban Ecology Center T-shirt* works perfectly!



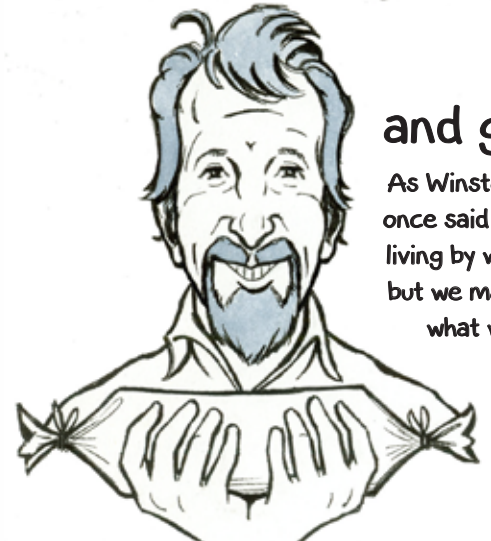
* - Shirts are available in adult short-sleeved and long-sleeved sizes and youth sizes.



Just roll,



tape & tie,
The Greatest Gift!



and give it!

As Winston Churchill once said "We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give."

For more gift ideas that support the Urban Ecology Center visit urbanecologycenter.org/greatestgift



Appreciating Wild Spaces

by Glenna Holstein, Branch Manager - Menomonee Valley

I am writing this article on my way back to Milwaukee after an incredible trip to Alaska. Willie Karidis, with lighthearted expertise, gave the Urban Ecology Center eco-travel group a wonderful experience of wilderness. We witnessed Denali, the tallest mountain on the continent, rise out of brilliant reds and yellows of Alaska autumn. We marveled at moose and wandered among wolf tracks. We splashed through icy rivers and padded across spongy tundra. It was a trip filled with awe for vast expanses of beauty that stretched as far as we could see and amazement at remarkable minutia close enough to touch. Willie called it "Subarctic splendor."

But this article is not about the Alaskan wilderness. At least, not exactly.

This trip was just the kind of experience that first made me want to work in the environmental field. Growing up I craved "pristine" wilderness experiences. As I child, I remember trying to find the exact spot along the Milwaukee River where I couldn't see any buildings above the trees and then pretend I was not in a city.

In the last few years, something has shifted in the way I appreciate "wilderness." I noticed it very distinctly on our most recent staff retreat at Camp Silverbrook in West Bend. On my first retreat, 6 years ago, I remember thinking, "You know, this would be just perfect if I couldn't hear the highway." But this time, I noticed that the highway sounds didn't bother me as much. In a way I appreciated them; they were a reminder of how easy it is to get to a beautiful outdoor place.

Similarly, I've come to appreciate places like Three Bridges Park for their accessibility and the way they are connected to the urban landscape, rather than their "away-ness." It's pretty incredible to stand on the 33rd Ct. Bridge and hear on one side the sounds of a manufacturing facility while on the other side hear the persistent chattering of a kingfisher as it swoops to catch a fish in the river.

Because we live in a society that tends to cultivate feelings of stress, self-importance and an illusion of independence, places where we can feel calm and small and connected are tremendously important. So, these small snatches of green space, where we do most of our work, feel just as sacred as Denali to me. And even if it's not "subarctic," I think you can (and should!) find splendor there. 🌿



From Fear to Understanding

by Kara Baldwin, Environmental Educator

I love fall! We begin a new school year with excited students, perfect sunny days and beautiful changing leaves. Fall is also when I get to teach a class that brings kids into the water to look for macroinvertebrates. It's one of my favorite classes to teach.

The program begins with the students tucking in their shirts and climbing into waders to explore the Milwaukee River. We hand them kick nets and bins to hold the benthic invertebrates they find. As we head to the river, there is nervous excitement. It is fun to watch the first groups get their bearings in the water. One student sets her net in the water facing upstream, as others twist their feet on the river bottom to kick up dirt clouds in the water. As the invertebrates are loosened from the rocks, they flow with the current into the net. It seems like all distractions disappear once the students get into the water and search for these little animals. They are focused on the

task at hand: find tons of water creatures.

The first net is always the most interesting. The kids are unsure of what to look for so when they realize those small and squirmy creatures are damselfly nymphs, caddisfly larvae and other macroinvertebrates, they are intrigued and ready for more. And when a group finds a crayfish, all the other groups join the hunt to look for more "small lobsters."

I enjoy this program because the attitudes of the kids change within minutes. Not everyone is certain about the squirmy "bugs," but they all seem content exploring. While I was helping a group of water explorers this fall, I pointed out that the brown invertebrate with a sucker was a leech. The initial reaction of the young girl holding the net was to scream and drop the net into the river. After some encouraging words, she was daring enough to touch it, tentatively grab it, and then as quickly as possible drop it

into her group's bin. A mixture of screaming and laughing filled the air. In less than a minute, this girl moved from fear to understanding. From "I'll never touch that!" to "Let's go find some more!"

A scene like this is replicated every day in different habitats at the Urban Ecology Center: climbing on a tree, flipping over logs, digging in compost. The simple act of exploration transforms kids into scientists as they make their own observations, draw their own conclusions, and face their fears in a safe environment. Kids naturally move from discomfort to comfort as they spend more time outdoors. In these natural environments, students can wonder, imagine and question. Through their interest, learning becomes easy, organic. Each school year I am reminded that it's the little, simple moments (like experiencing the slimy texture of a leech) that can make the biggest impact. 🌿

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

Wow, What a Fantastic Year!

We recently asked our staff "What are your favorite accomplishments of this year?" They responded with a flood of examples — so many that we can't even share them all on this page! Here are some of the highlights:



Three Bridges Park is **growing**

With the addition of community gardens, 900 herbaceous plants and an increasing number of visitors, Three Bridges Park has become a meaningful part of the landscape and community.



Volunteers helped us find **367 animal species** in our parks, including 136 kinds of birds!



Citizen Science in action

Our school program, the Neighborhood Environmental Education Project, had **28,000** student visits

**Our "year" is based on the school year rather than the calendar year. This data reflects some highlights from September 2013 through August 2014.*



Theaster Gates and Ken Leinbach



Building Community

After a formal agreement, internationally known Theaster Gates Studios reclaimed materials from our Riverland property to create art and opportunity.

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

Come to Our Annual Meeting on November 12th!

It's time to celebrate and be thankful for the past year! Join us on November 12th at 7pm for our Volunteer Appreciation Party and Annual Meeting, an evening of food and fun as we celebrate our year and thank our wonderful volunteers for the tremendous work they do (see page 2 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: **John Clancy, Eric Crawford,**

Dan Davis, Ed Krishok, Blake Moret, Will Nasgovitz and André Williams.

We would also like to recognize two new Directors **Bob Bourgeois and Brian VanDerWeele.** All Center members in attendance can vote to approve these new Directors.

Last, we'd like to recognize the following Directors who are leaving the Board: **Danni Gendelman, Cora Lee-Palmer, Mary Staten and Carl Trimble.** The entire Urban Ecology Center family thanks you for your service, dedication and wisdom. 🍂

DROPLETS

LEARN MORE ABOUT THESE TOPICS ON OUR WEBSITE

- Let's give a hand to Tory Bahe.** Nominated by several colleagues, Tory was selected as a recipient of a state-wide educator award by the Wisconsin Association of Environmental Education. Tory is a phenomenal educator, artfully blending patience, structure, humor, creativity and a nearly magical rapport with people of all ages to give them an incredible experience each time they visit Washington Park. With warmth and humor, Tory helps others discover the wonders of nature in their own neighborhood park and unlocks the excitement and empowerment that comes from gaining new scientific knowledge. You rock, Tory!
- Wish List.** 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
 Apple PowerBook
 Bedsheets
 Blenders
 HD quality video camera

Washington Park
 Large easel
 Power washer
 Small air compressor
 Socks - all sizes
 Watering wand
 Wooden high chairs

Menomonee Valley
 Plastic graduated cylinder -100 ml (3)
 Podium (rolling or portable)
 Relief map of WI
 Set of rubber animal tracks and scat
 Soil probes (2)
 Winter boots (all sizes)

Summer Camps at the Urban Ecology Center

Registration begins in January!
 Check our next newsletter for details



at all three branches · preschool-8th grade

Thank You to Our Contributing Members

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

Credits:



Carijean Buhk
 Editor

The Urban Ecology Center Newsletter is created and distributed through a team effort by the following people: Carijean Buhk, Matthew Gnas, Roxanne Helmeid, Jeff McAvoy, Pat Mueller and Demetria Smith.

Contributors: Kara Baldwin, Aaron Boyd, Beth Heller, Glenna Holstein, Jessica St. John and Ken Leinbach.

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NEWSLETTER

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

To make a contribution, please see below for the easy to use form, visit our website at www.urbanecologycenter.org 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:
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
uec@urbanecologycenter.org

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

Menomonee Valley

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

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

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

BECOME A CONTRIBUTING MEMBER

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

Choose a Contributing Member Level:

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

Give a gift membership:

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

Recipient Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Email _____

Occasion _____ Deliver by _____

Membership Type: Individual \$35 Family \$45

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

Total \$_____

Name I would like to remain anonymous

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

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

Card Number _____ Exp. Date _____ 3-digit code _____

Signature _____

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

My gift is in honor of or in memory of _____

My employer (list below) has a matching gift program _____

I would like information about estate and planned giving

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

Did you know you can become a contributing member securely online? Visit urbanecologycenter.org and click membership.

Celebrate the Winter Solstice!

Candlelight Walk

(RP) Sat., Dec. 20 | 7 - 9PM

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

A guided candlelit walk through Riverside Park with poetry and readings of the season. Inside enjoy cider, snacks and music.

Candlelight Walk *for kids*

(RP) Sat., Dec. 20 | 4:30 - 6:30PM

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

Enjoy the wonder of a winter night with stories for kids on an easy walk through the woods. Inside enjoy games and treats.

FSC logo

IN THIS ISSUE

WE'RE IN IT TOGETHER

by Beth Heller

Imagine what could be achieved if everyone truly held themselves to this understanding. What would happen to crime, segregation, oppression, pollution or exploitation if, instead of thinking "what's in it for me," we thought "we're in it together."

THE GREATEST GIFT OF ALL TIME

by Aaron Boyd and Ken Leinbach

A story of giving meaningful holiday gifts. As Winston Churchill once said, "We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give."

APPRECIATING WILD SPACES

by Glenna Holstein

I've come to appreciate places like Three Bridges Park for their accessibility and the way they are connected to the urban landscape, rather than their "away-ness."

FROM FEAR TO UNDERSTANDING

by Kara Baldwin

The simple act of exploration transforms kids into scientists as they make their own observations, draw their own conclusions, and face their fears in a safe environment.

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



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