



## Milwaukee River Trails Getting a Facelift

by Ken Leinbach, Executive Director, Kim Forbeck, Senior Land Steward and Tim Vargo, Manager of Research & Citizen Science



Ever since the North Avenue Dam was removed in 1996, the Milwaukee River Corridor from Estabrook to downtown has gone through a remarkable transformation. Where once only a few species of fish could live in the highly polluted waters, this stretch is now teeming with life. The odors and toxins that pervaded the water are thankfully but a memory. As the fish came back, so did the people who love to catch them. Many spontaneous trails developed along the river's edge braiding the banks as mountain bikers, hikers, nature enthusiasts and dog walkers found solace in this healing sanctuary. In those early years we'd often have to bring a machete to make it through thick plant growth as there was no East Bank Trail (there is now thanks to the good work of the River Revitalization Foundation) and the west side was often overgrown. Few knew that much of this land was private as the owners, mostly businesses, rarely ventured to the river. A kind of happy anarchy existed. People did what they wanted and trails formed to match this use.

Fast forward to today. Not only has the river continued to improve, but thanks to thousands of volunteers, invasive plants have been replaced with native vegetation. In some areas, especially near the Urban Ecology Center, the resulting biodiversity is impressive. Much of the private land (through purchase, easements and agreements) has been converted to public use so people are no longer inadvertently

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## Get Outside and Play... Doctor's Orders!

by Beth Heller, Senior Director of Education and Strategic Planning

Who knew that when our parents told us to go outside and play they were dispensing medical advice? In the previous issue of the newsletter I mentioned "Indoor Sickness", a term coined by Dr. Daphne Miller, that increasingly is gaining attention from medical professionals. "Indoor Sickness" is an umbrella term for diseases linked to a sedentary lifestyle. Physicians like Dr. Miller are "prescribing" time out in nature as a part of a healthy lifestyle. Makes sense, right? Humans are an integral part of the ecosystem and our health is tied to it.

Get active outdoors/feel better is something many of us have experienced. Here at the Urban Ecology Center, our core mission is to help people of all ages develop an ecological understanding which inspires them to make changes that result in a healthy environment, now and into the future. We believe that our health is tied to the health of the ecosystem. We know this, but how can we measure it?

We kicked off 2012 with a project to measure the Center's impact on public health. Through the Healthier Wisconsin Partnership Program, over the next two years we will be studying how our programs, specifically the ones at our Menomonee Valley branch, influence positive lifestyle changes. As we close the first year of the project, we'd like to share some highlights of the Center's work related to community health.

### Active lifestyles

According to the Center for Disease Control, childhood obesity rates have tripled in the last 30 years and over two thirds of adults are overweight or obese. Exercise combined with good nutrition can combat these issues and prevent the numerous, expensive health issues associated with obesity. The Urban Ecology Center combats obesity and indoor sickness through year-round outdoor programs

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## Branch Highlights



### RIVERSIDE PARK

Over 10,000 volunteer hours have been dedicated to the Arboretum! If you've stopped by the park recently you may have seen the arboretum beginning to take shape on the newly acquired land adjacent to the parking lot. Stop by often and watch the exciting transformation from brownfield to natural area!



### WASHINGTON PARK

We love Winter! Once the snow falls be sure and visit us to check out cross country skis, snowshoes, sleds and ice skates. We will lend them out free to members. Not a member? No problem. Join us and enjoy a winter of fun in Washington Park.



### MENOMONEE VALLEY

Have you been to the Menomonee Valley branch yet? No? Well then it's time for a visit! The gorgeous community mosaic is in place, and we have a full Native Wisconsin Animal Room, a super fun "tree" slide and an incredible staff who would love to meet you!



## Starting Fresh

by Laurel Cutright, Environmental Educator

It is my first autumn as an educator with the Neighborhood Environmental Education Program at Washington Park, and I'm thrilled to be able to start a full year with my students. One of my first trips this school year was with a four-year-old kindergarten class from the MPS charter school Hawley Environmental. I realized that this trip would most likely be their first ever field trip and I honestly felt a little intimidated. However, as we buckled into the big white bus decorated with colorful animal designs, one of the students said, "Wow, this bus is cool!"

**"Knowledge without love will not stick. But if love comes first, knowledge is sure to follow."**

- John Burroughs

"If they are impressed by the bus," I thought, "this is going to be a GREAT trip!"

Once at Washington Park, my co-teacher and I spent a few minutes inside, entertaining the class with a puppet show. Then we headed out into the gorgeous September afternoon to find all the colors of nature's palette. We made a poster of leaves and flowers with different colors and used paper frames to observe the colors of leaves up close. The class needed absolutely no encouragement to find leaves beneath our maple trees. They ran shrieking into the

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## Annual Meeting is November 28th!

Join us on November 28 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. **The Officers for 2012-2013 are: President: Ed Krishok, Vice President: Monique Charlier, Treasurer: Pete Campbell, Secretary: Kathy Werlein.**

We'd also like the following Directors who are graciously agreeing to serve another two-year term: **John Clancy, Eric Crawford, Blake Moret, Will Nasgovitz, Cora Lee-Palmer, Mary E. Staten, Carl Trimble and André Williams.**

Also, we'd would also like to recognize a new Director we will ask our membership to approve: **Dan Davis.** Dan and his wife, Beth, have four sons and live on Milwaukee's east side. He worked in Construction Management for four years at the City of Milwaukee and 21 years with CG Schmidt. Dan is a member of the Milwaukee Rotary and is chairing the Arboretum Task Force. He helped found the Wisconsin Green Building Alliance and is very active in various other community activities and professional organizations.

Last, we'd like to recognize the following individuals who are leaving the Board: **Marc Andraca, Jeff Geygan, and Theresa Lins.** The entire Urban Ecology Center family thanks you for your service, dedication and wisdom. You will be missed. 🍂

### 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: Laurel Cutright, Jamie Ferschinger, Kim Forbeck, Beth Heller, Glenna Holstein, Ken Leinbach and Tim Vargo.



## DROPLETS

LEARN MORE ABOUT THESE TOPICS ON OUR WEBSITE

- **The Great Alaska Adventure!** The trip led by Willie Karidis, Branch Manager - Washington Park, was so much fun we are going to do it again! Stay tuned for details in our next newsletter. Any questions? Email Branch Manager and tour guide, Willie at [wkaridis@urbanecologycenter.org](mailto:wkaridis@urbanecologycenter.org).

- **Where's the Wish List? Our Wish List has moved to our website! Below are some items we need for our three branches. Visit <http://urbanecologycenter.org/get-involved/wishlist.html> for an expanded list.**

### Riverside Park

- 3 umbrella stands
- Apple PowerBook
- Automotive repair tools
- Propane Grill
- Kernel popcorn
- Leaf rakes
- Mittens and gloves- especially adult sizes
- Rain ponchos/jackets- all sizes
- Men's belts

### Washington Park

- Aprons
- Blenders
- Buckets (2 to 5 GA size) for fish
- Chest waders (w/suspenders)
- Cornstarch
- Fleece or waterproof gloves or mittens
- Kids' work gloves
- Laptop computer, netbook or iPad
- Old Plastic storage bins with lids

### Menomonee Valley

- 15 Insect Field Guides
- 20 sweep nets for terrestrial insect collection
- 5 Gallon Buckets with Handles
- Bird feathers
- Butterfly mounts
- Extension ladder
- Glass pie dish
- Set of rubber animal tracks and scat
- Sleds
- Telescopes

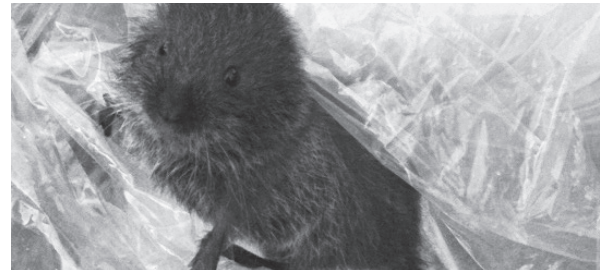
# SEE FOR YOURSELF! (No really, see what's happened with your support)

Our park's are very busy places! Animals use our park's resources as they nest and migrate. How do we know? Researchers and Citizen Science volunteers monitor animals in the parks including bats, turtles, snakes, small mammals and invertebrates!

Here's what they've found:



Volunteers helped band over **200 birds** this past fall. Over 180 species have been found in Riverisde Park, a testament to the Center's habitat restoration process.



**21** mammal species in the park, including 5 species of bats!

Over **8** different butterfly species!

Families of **Butler's Gartersnakes**, a midwestern species with one small population in southeastern Wisconsin



If you'd like to support programs like these, consider volunteering or making a donation. Learn how at [www.urbanecologycenter.org](http://www.urbanecologycenter.org)



## Giving Thanks

by Glenna Holstein, Branch Manager, Menomonee Valley

I really enjoy Thanksgiving, because it's a whole day set aside for one of my favorite feelings — gratitude. I'd like to get a head start on giving thanks this year, because there is so much to be grateful for around here!

Ever since we began the adventure of opening the Menomonee Valley branch, I've been overwhelmed by the support and kindness of so many of you in the Urban Ecology Center family (a family that grows every day!). It's incredible how often I get to hear: "I'd like to give \_\_\_\_\_ to the Center." And "\_\_\_\_\_" has been anything from a post-hole-digger to a baby milk snake to extraordinary offers of volunteered time and financial support. I am humbled by the generosity of our community, which reflects a deep commitment to the work

we are doing. As I said at our Grand Opening, these moments remind me that the Center itself is really just like the frame of the mosaic that hangs at Menomonee Valley. The place provides structure, but the energy, talents, dedication, creativity and generosity of each one of you — which allow us collectively to "heal the land, and have the land heal us,"—are the beautiful mosaic pieces.

There is no way that I can sufficiently thank you all in one newsletter article, but I want you to know how really grateful we are for everyone's support. Your gifts are already enabling wonderful things to happen! An energetic crew of Young Scientists is out exploring our park, learning how to tag migrating monarchs and extract honey from honeycomb. Students

from eight new schools are getting hands-on science experiences in our newest outdoor classroom. Adults who have never explored the Menomonee River are discovering the joy of watching a great blue heron take flight. And as people are drawn together here, new voices are being added to our community and new relationships are being built. It's pretty amazing!

A friend of mine says that it's always best to "begin and end in gratitude." This is a wonderful practice both for everyday life and for us as an organization. So, as we continue starting up at Menomonee Valley, and as I reflect on how thankful I am for the support and generosity of each of you, I'm happy to say that here in the Valley we are definitely "beginning in gratitude." Thank you, and happy Thanksgiving! 🍁



## 18 New Faces

by Jamie Ferschinger, Branch Manager, Riverside Park

If you ask any of the Center staff, each person probably has a handful of programs which are their favorites. These are the programs that make us want to come to work each day. One of my favorite programs is the High School Outdoor Leader Program. This program – dare I say it- sometimes makes me want to be in high school again.

The Outdoor Leader program combines adventure, education and job training. But it is so much more than that! During their time with us we watch the Outdoor Leaders learn about themselves, their community and the world. We support them as they navigate through their high school years and help them evaluate where their path will lead them next. In their two years with us, the Outdoor Leaders will gain environmental literacy and develop an environmental ethic while learning job skills and working amongst

people who genuinely care about them.

This summer we welcomed 18 new high school students to the Center through this program. They had an exciting summer of training at the Center's three branches and traveling to northern Wisconsin and the Porcupine Mountains. After they became used to the idea of not having their cell phone <gasp>, not showering and existing with dirt and spiders for a week...it was an amazing experience. I was proud as I watched each of the Outdoor Leaders step outside of their comfort zones and ultimately discover comfort somewhere in this new environment.

Six Outdoor Leaders work at each of the three branches. They represent nine different high schools, five ethnic groups and bring unique energy and new ideas to the Center. Next time you visit any of the branches please

introduce yourself to the new Outdoor Leaders! In fact, you may already know some of them from this past summer.

At Riverside Park you'll find Altonetta Bingham, Mieko Kuramoto, Damonte Lee, Damion Perry, Olivia Raasch and Talore Williams.

At Washington Park you can meet Calvin Huffer, Alberto Kanost, Darrin Madison, Zahara Said, Kia Vue and Xai Yang.

At Menomonee Valley you can visit Gabrielle Brown, Elizabeth Dannecker, Andrea Gutierrez, Richard Imp, Patrick McLinden and Tomas Stricklen.

We think they are wonderful and I am sure you will too! When they change the world you can say, "I knew them when they worked at the Urban Ecology Center." 🍁

#### FEATURED EVENTS



**WINTER SOLSTICE  
CANDLELIGHT WALK**

Celebrate the Winter Solstice. Join us for a guided candlelit walk through Riverside Park and 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 half hour.

**(RP) Saturday, December 15 | 7 - 9 pm**

For adults, teens and families  
Free - donations appreciated  
(Non-members: \$5)

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## CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Join thousands of volunteers from around the world for the annual Christmas Bird Count. Data we collect contributes to an international database that looks at bird population trends.

HAPPENING AT  
2 LOCATIONS

**EAST SIDE**

at our Riverside Park Branch

**WEST SIDE**

at our Menomonee Valley Branch

Both hikes include a stop for brunch and will return to their starting locations. Dress for a long hike appropriate to the weather and bring money for brunch.

**Saturday, December 15th | 8:00 am - 3:00 pm**

FOR ADULTS AND TEENS / FREE - DONATIONS APPRECIATED

## VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION PARTY & ANNUAL MEETING

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

**HEAVY APPETIZERS  
WILL BE SERVED**

**(RP) Wednesday, November 28th**

**5:30 - 7:30 pm**

For adults and teens  
Free - donations appreciated

Please RSVP by November 21th.  
Register online or by phone.

### RIVERSIDE PARK



The days are getting shorter and chillier as we approach the Winter Solstice. It is a great time to get outside and then warm up with your friends and neighbors at the Riverside Park branch. **There is something for everyone on December 15th.** You can count birds, track animals, go on a winter hike, and experience poetry in the calm, winter darkness at the **Candlelight Walk**. Celebrate winter with us!

— *Jamie Ferschinger, Branch Manager*  
- Riverside Park

### WASHINGTON PARK



Ever wonder about the secrets of Nanotechnology or how to best make your home energy efficient or what it would be like to spend 61 days alone during the winter in the heart of Denali National Park, Alaska? These are just a few of the topics being covered by this year's Winter Lecture Series. Come join us!

— *Willie Karidis, Branch Manager*  
- Washington Park

### MENOMONEE VALLEY



Welcome winter at the Menomonee Valley by bundling up and heading outside for one of our outdoor explorations — join us for **Photo Phenology, a Nighttime Owl Walk, or the Christmas Bird Count**. If you need to head inside to warm up, come get in touch with your artistic side with **Creative Salad Decoration or Green Gift Making!** And if you want to lend us your talents, attend one of our Volunteer Orientations and get involved!

— *Glenna Holstein, Branch Manager*  
- Menomonee Valley

## Urban Ecology Center Holiday Hours

### Riverside Park

Thu., Nov. 22 - Fri., Nov. 23	Closed
Mon., Dec. 24 - Tue., Dec. 25	Closed
Wed., Dec. 26 - Sat., Dec. 29	9a - 5p
Sun., Dec. 30	Noon - 5pm
Mon., Dec 31 - Tue. Jan., 1	Closed

### Washington Park

Thu., Nov. 22 - Sat., Nov 24	Closed
Tue., Dec. 25	Closed
Wed., Dec. 26 - Sat., Dec. 29	1 - 4p
Mon., Dec 31 - Tue. Jan., 1	Closed

### Menomonee Valley

Thu., Nov. 22 - Sat., Nov 24	Closed
Tue., Dec. 25	Closed
Wed., Dec. 26 - Sat., Dec. 29	1 - 4p
Mon., Dec 31 - Tue. Jan., 1	Closed

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

# ABOUT THE Quick Guide

As our online tools improve, we strive to rely less on paper based communications. This "quick guide" is meant to inform you about the programs happening at the Urban Ecology Center's three branches and give you a brief description and any essential information you may need for them. Full details and registration forms can be found on our website at: [www.urbanecologycenter.org/calendar](http://www.urbanecologycenter.org/calendar)

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

### Volunteer Orientation

Want to spend more time outside? Interested in sharing your gifts with the community? Come find out how you can contribute your time and talents to the Urban Ecology Center.

- (RP) Fri., Nov. 2 | 3 - 4:30pm
- (RP) Thu., Nov. 8 | 5:30 - 7pm
- (RP) Sat., Nov. 17 | 10:30am - noon
- (RP) Fri., Nov. 30 | 3 - 4:30pm
- (RP) Thu., Dec. 6 | 5:30pm - 7pm
- (RP) Sat., Dec. 15 | 10:30am - noon

- (WP) Thu., Nov. 1 | 4:30 - 5:30pm
- (WP) Tue., Nov. 13 | 5:30 - 6:30pm
- (WP) Sat., Dec. 1 | 10:30 - 11:30am
- (WP) Thu., Dec. 13 | 5:30 - 6:30pm

- (MV) Sat., Nov. 10 | 10:30am - noon
  - (MV) Fri., Nov. 16 | 3 - 4:30pm
  - (MV) Tue., Nov. 27 | 5:30 - 7pm
  - (MV) Sat., Dec. 8 | 10:30am - noon
  - (MV) Tue., Dec. 11 | 5:30 - 7pm
- For adults and teens | Free - donations appreciated

### Compost Crew

Come and help keep the Center's compost systems working full steam!

- (RP) Every Tue. | 2 - 4pm
- 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. 22 | 4 - 5:30pm

- (RP) Every Tue. except Dec. 25 and Jan. 1 | 9 - 11am

- (RP) 1st & 3rd Sat. of the month | 9:30 - 11am
- 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 Tue. except Dec. 25 | 4 - 6pm
- For adults and teens | Free - donations appreciated

### Forestry Fridays

Help us improve the health of our forests in Riverside Park, the Milwaukee Rotary Centennial Arboretum and Washington Park.

- (RP) Every Fri. except Nov. 23 | 2 - 4pm
- 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.

- (RP) Every 2nd, 4th & 5th Sat. of the month | 9:30 - 11am
  - (WP) Every Sat. | 9 - 10am
  - (MV) Every Thu. except Nov. 22 | 10am - Noon
- For adults, families, and teens  
Free - donations appreciated

**All Urban Ecology Center locations have special hours during the holidays. See the first page in this guide for details.**

## INTEREST GROUPS

### Victory Garden Initiative Eat and Meet

- (RP) Tue., Nov. 6 & Dec. 4 | 6:30 - 8pm

### Photo Club

- (RP) Thu., Nov. 1 & Dec. 6 | 6:30 - 8:30pm

### New Urban Friends

- (RP) Mon., Nov. 12 | 7:30 - 9pm

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

The Linda & Gene Farley Center for Peace, Justice & Sustainability  
(RP) Wed., Nov. 14 | 6 - 8pm

Eat Local Longer, The Story of the Winter Farmers Market  
(RP) Wed., Dec. 12 | 6 - 8pm

### Urban Echo Poets

- (RP) Thu., Nov. 8 & Dec. 13 | 7 - 8:30pm

### Urban Stargazers

- (RP) Thu., Nov. 8 & Dec. 13 | 7 - 8:30pm

### Vegetarian Potluck

- (RP) Thu., Nov. 15 & Dec. 20 | 6:30 - 8pm

### Early Morning Birdwalks

- (MV) Every Tue. except Dec. 25 and Jan. 1 | 8am
- (WP) Every Wed. | 8am
- (RP) Every Thu. except Nov. 22 | 8am

Get weekly emails about our programs!

THE  
WEEKLY  
GUIDE

THE  
WEEKLY  
R&R

Our Main email Newsletter  
list of events for the coming week

Research & Restoration News  
native plant and animal of the month

Sign up on our website  
[www.urbanecologycenter.org](http://www.urbanecologycenter.org)

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					

## Quick Guide

### Young Scientists Club

From hiking to gardening to helping with research to caring for our Center's animals, every day in the Young Scientists Club is a new adventure.

**(RP)** Every Mon - Thu except Nov. 22, Dec. 24, 25, 31

& Jan. 1 | 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 except Nov. 22, 23, Dec. 25 & Jan. 1 | 4 - 6pm

and Every Sat | 1 - 4pm

For kids ages 7-12 years old

\$10 annual membership

**(MV)** Every Tue. & Thu. except Nov. 22, Dec. 25 & Jan. 1 | 4 - 6pm

and Every Sat. | 1 - 4pm

For ages 5-12 | \$10 annual membership

### Animal Feeding

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

**(RP) (WP) & (MV)** Every Sat. | 1pm

For everyone | Free -

donations appreciated

### Basic Animal Care

Caring for animals can be a powerful way to connect with nature. Join one of our animal caretakers for a tour of our Native Wisconsin Animal Room and a beginners lesson on how to care for native fish, reptiles, and amphibians.

**(WP)** Sat., Nov. 10 | 10 - 11am

For everyone | Adults \$6

(Nonmembers: \$9), Children

\$4 (Nonmembers: \$6)

### Animals of Winter Hike

Learn how different Wisconsin animals survive the cold winters of the Midwest.

**(RP)** Sat., Nov. 24 | 10 - 11:30am

For families and children | Adults:

\$6 (Nonmembers: \$9), Children:

\$4 (Nonmembers: \$7)

### Making Green Gifts!

Want to go green for your gift giving this holiday season? Join us to learn how to take materials you might otherwise toss and "upcycle" them into beautiful books and other creative gift ideas.

**(MV)** Sat., Dec. 8 | 10 - 11:30am

For adults, teens and families

with children ages 8 and up

/ Adults: \$6 (Nonmembers:

\$9) per person, Children \$4

(Nonmembers: \$7) per person

### Tracking Through the Snow

Hike through Riverside Park to search for tracks of our favorite winter friends. Learn more about which animals make which tracks. This program is not dependent on snow.

**(RP)** Sat., Dec. 15 | 10 - 11:30am

For families and children / Adults:

\$6 (Nonmembers: \$9), Children:

\$4 (Nonmembers: \$7)

### Cooking Circle: Baking with Sugar Alternatives

Bring the family and join chef Annie Wegner LeFort to learn some healthier baking recipes that will help you kick the sugar habit. We will prepare holiday cookies and other desserts using alternatives to white sugar: honey, xylitol, stevia, sorghum, and more.

**(RP)** Mon., Dec. 17 | 6 - 8:30pm

For adults, teens and families

\$20 (Nonmembers: \$25)

### Food Fridays

Join our Young Scientists Club in the planting and maintenance of our Learning Gardens, and help us cook and enjoy tasty meals with the harvest!

**(WP)** Every Fri. except Nov.

23 and Dec. 28 | 4 - 6pm

For kids ages 7-12 years old | Free

for Young Scientist Club members

(Nonmembers: \$5 suggested donation)

### Science Saturdays and Sundays

Discover the world of science through self-led interactive activities and crafts. The theme for November and December: "Water, Water, Everywhere!"

**(RP)** Drop in program

Every Sat. | 10am - 4pm

Every Sun. | 1 - 4pm

For everyone

Free - donations appreciated

## HOMESCHOOL SERIES

### Animals of Milwaukee

Milwaukee is full of wildlife in our own backyards! Come explore our brand new Native Wisconsin Animal Room and search for animals in Washington Park's beautiful 135 acres!

**(WP)** Tue., Nov. 20 | 2 - 3:30pm

For homeschoolers | \$5

(Nonmembers: \$7)

### Wild About Water!

There's water all around us! Join us as we learn about how water cycles in nature, and learn some practical ways to preserve water in your home.

**(RP)** Tue., Dec. 11 | 2 - 3:30pm

For homeschoolers | \$5

(Nonmembers - \$7)

## ART AT THE CENTER

### Art Show:

#### Marc Tasman, Kathleen Walter and Tom Petri

Take a journey through Wiesbord Acres viewing Marc Tasman's brilliant photos. Enjoy Kathleen Walter's unique mixed media compositions and be amazed by Tom Petri's lifelike bird carvings. A show not to be missed!

**(RP)** Show available for viewing

during RP open hours until

the end of December

For adults and teens | Free -

donations appreciated

## TEEN PROGRAMS

### Stargazing and Snowshoes

Enjoy a night of snowshoeing through the forest and stargazing on the tower - plus some hot chocolate to warm you up! Wear lace up shoes or boots. This event is not dependent on snow.

**(RP)** Tue., Dec. 11 | 7 - 8:30pm

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

*All Urban Ecology Center locations have special hours during the holidays. See the first page in this guide for details.*

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](http://www.urbanecologycenter.org/calendar)

**3 WAYS TO REGISTER:**

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

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

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

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

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

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



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



## Quick Guide

### Save the Date! Greening and Violence Prevention

Learn how environmental interventions can be a valuable component to reduce violence in cities. The Violence Prevention Initiative series hosted by the Medical College of Wisconsin welcomes Dr. Charles Branas, PhD to present his encouraging research. Visit <http://www.mcw.edu/vpi.htm> for info.

Mon., Nov. 19 | TBA  
For everyone | Free - donations appreciated | Registration information coming soon!

### Menomonee Valley Walking Tours

Branch Manager Glenna Holstein and Corey Zetts from Menomonee Valley Partners will discuss the Valley's history, current revitalization and future plans!

(MV) Every 1st & 3rd Wed. through Dec. 19 | 10 - 11am  
For adults | Free - donations appreciated

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

Join us for an in-depth look into bird ecology, conservation and behavior. Join this ongoing series anytime. Lecture followed by walk. All levels of birders welcome. Binoculars provided.

(RP) Sat., Nov. 3 | 3:30 - 5pm  
(MV) Sat., Dec. 1 | 2 - 03:30pm  
For adults | Members: \$5 (Nonmembers: \$10)

### Beekeeping Basics

THREE PART SERIES 

Three, 2-hour courses will give you the foundation to start beekeeping in a Top Bar Hive.

(RP) Mon., Nov. 5, 12 and 19 or Mon., Dec. 3, 10 and 17 | 6:30 - 8:30pm  
For adults | \$85 (Nonmembers: \$100)

### Beesentation: Bees and Beekeeping Revealed!

In this introduction to bees and beekeeping, you'll discover who is inside the hive and how people manage bees.

(RP) Tue., Nov. 6, 20, Dec. 4 or 18 | 6:30 - 8:30pm  
For adults | \$10 (Nonmembers: \$15)

### Dr. Ying Li : Nanotechnology for a Green Future

Discover cutting-edge research and nanotechnology's role in reducing carbon emissions and generating fuel.

(WP) Wed., Nov. 7 | 7 - 8pm  
For adults and teens | \$5 (Nonmembers: \$10)

### Home Cheese Making: From Curd to Press

Join home cheese maker Linda Conroy and learn to make feta and cheddar cheese. Participants receive recipes to make at home, samples and cheese curds.

(RP) Thu., Nov. 8 | 6 - 8:30pm  
For adults | \$40 (\$45 Non-members)

### Photo Phenology

We'll meet each month to photograph and sketch the natural area around the Center. Cameras or sketch pads not required but bring your own if you can.

(MV) Sat., Nov. 10 and Dec. 15 10 - 11:30am  
For adults, teens and families  
Free - donations appreciated

### Getting a Grip on Home Energy Use

Jim Maletta, of North Star Energy consulting, will give home owners tips for reducing both natural gas and electricity usage in the home. One lucky participant will win a free copy of the book *The Family Handyman: Easy Home Repair*.

Tue., Nov. 13 | 7 - 8:30pm  
For adults | \$5 (Nonmembers: \$10)

### Creative Salad Decoration

Impress your guests and amaze your kids by shaping vegetables and fruits into leaves, flowers, funny animals, gardens, or landscapes. We'll provide ingredients or you can bring your favorites! Basic knife skills and creativity are all you need.

(MV) Sat., Nov. 17 | 10 - 11:30am  
For adults and families with children ages 6 and up | Adults: \$6 (Nonmembers: \$9), Children: \$4 (Nonmembers: \$7)

### Cooking Circle:

#### Make-a-Meal Challenge

In this class YOU provide the ingredients. Make scratch cooking economical by creating a tasty dish from your pantry, including leftovers, without a recipe. Chef Annie Wegner LeFort will provide oil, seasonings, etc.

(RP) Mon., Nov. 19 | 6 - 8:30pm  
For adults and teens | \$15 (Nonmembers: \$18)

### Honey Soap Making

Join Kat Theisen to learn how to make your own soap using sunflower oil and locally made honey. You can take home the soap you make and Kat will have more soap available for sale.

(MV) Sat., Dec. 1 | 1 - 3:30pm  
For adults and families with children ages 8 and up | \$20, (Nonmembers: \$25)

### Willie Karidis: Wilderness of Denali 100

Experience the winter solitude of 61 days in the backcountry of Denali National Park, Alaska with our Washington Park Branch Manager, Willie Karidis. Through photos and stories, Willie will share how he learned all he could about Denali, the winter wilderness and ultimately, himself.

(WP) Wed., Dec. 5 | 7 - 8pm  
For adults and teens / \$5 (Nonmembers: \$10)

## URBAN ADVENTURES

### Nighttime Owl Walk

Discover a whole new side of the park by exploring it at night! We will use all of our senses to find fascinating birds that are hidden during the day. We'll learn all about their cool nighttime adaptations and how they are different from daytime birds. And we'll have fun finding them!

(MV) Wed., Nov. 7 | 4:30 - 6pm  
For adults and families | Free - donations appreciated

*These programs are supported by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, under Assistance Agreement No. GL00E00651-0 and the Wisconsin DNR.*

### Milwaukee River Hike

Learn about the amazing projects that are helping to improve the health of the Milwaukee River.

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

### Kinnickinnic River Hike

Hike along this hidden waterway as we discuss projects that have improved this local resource.

(RP) Sat., Dec. 15 | 10am - noon  
For adults, teens and families | Free (Nonmembers: \$5)

**All Urban Ecology Center locations have special hours during the holidays. See the first page in this guide for details.**

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](http://www.urbanecologycenter.org/calendar)

**3 WAYS TO REGISTER:**

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

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

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

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

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

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



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



## Starting Fresh

Continued from page 2

park, scooping up leaves to examine or toss in the air. Within minutes they were rolling in the leaves and grass, giggling with delight.

At that moment I understood that my job was not to entertain these students or to teach them about the hows and whys of science or even to remind them to recycle. My job was to encourage them to look, feel, run, roll...whatever they had to do to enjoy the park. Hawley Environmental is one of 50

partnering schools through our Neighborhood Environmental Education Project, so these students will have the opportunity to visit Washington Park every year, to progress from simple exploration to discovery of the complexity of the natural world.

With each visit, these four-year olds will feel more comfortable with the park and more observant of the local ecosystem. Over time they can become the next land stewards, the next environmental

educators, the next engaged neighbors.

I am excited to know that my fellow teachers and I will be there as guides and mentors throughout the years. As the naturalist John Burroughs wrote, "Knowledge without love will not stick. But if love comes first, knowledge is sure to follow." Instilling that love of nature in the neighborhood is the vital first step in learning to care for it. I think it's the most important aspect of my job, and, as the kindergartners reminded me, it can also be the easiest. 🌱

## Milwaukee River Trails Getting a Facelift

Continued from page 1

trespassing. More people are using this natural asset than ever before. This is a good thing. People who know the land love it and people who love the land protect it!

A few years ago, the Milwaukee River Greenway Coalition (which grew from the community) took a step back to look holistically at both the use of the river and the trails needed for access. Much neighborhood outreach ensued. A lot of never asked questions came up. Should dog walking be allowed? Are mountain bikes hurting the land? Are fisher people being responsible stewards of the river banks? Do we really even want people down there at all; maybe it should be left for the wildlife? Hard questions to answer especially when some uses impact others and not everyone embraces everyone else's activity.

I remember the meeting (and we've had a ton of public meetings) to discuss all of this, when a group of about 40 of us were arguing the issues associated with different uses. Jessica Binder (now of the Bicycle Federation) quietly suggested the radical idea of sharing. She pointed out that the existing anarchy has actually worked pretty well. Sure there is the occasional conflict and flare up, but by and large folks on the river are respectful and kind. Her comments resonated with us all and a new "shared use policy" was agreed upon as an idea to promote. The thought was, let's not welcome users with a sign full of all the things you can't do, but instead encourage a

culture of responsible shared use for everyone. So the question changed; where should we encourage different activities? Where is the best place for biking? Where is the best place for nature study? Where does it make sense to encourage those with limited mobility to visit?

The Coalition grappled with these questions and created a well-vetted plan for trail use, construction and maintenance for the entire 800 acres.

It was determined during this process that it made sense for the Urban Ecology Center to be a central hub to this amazing natural resource. Thus the Milwaukee Rotary Centennial Arboretum was born to serve as a gateway. The west bank was determined to be the best place to leave rustic. Cambridge Woods, with the most biodiversity, is great for nature lovers. A leash-less dog park was created in Estabrook Park.

Many of the spontaneous trails along the river which have been in use for years will continue to be enjoyed for years to come. Unfortunately, though, some trails, which are in high use areas or very close to the river, have become a detriment to water quality. Dirt paths that run close to the bank of the river often end up collapsing and adding excessive sediment to our waterways. Sedimentation affects the clarity and sunlight penetration into the water which affects the flora and fauna. Sediments also bond with pollutants and carry them

downstream to Lake Michigan. By building more sustainable trails above the floodplain, we can minimize negative effects on water quality while enhancing recreational enjoyment.

Last year we embarked on the first phase of creating accessible, sustainable trails for Riverside Park and our extended Rotary Centennial Arboretum boundaries. Closer to the Center we repaved some of the historic trails originally designed by Frederick Law Olmsted in 1893. When the Arboretum is complete there will be a network of universally accessible trails near the Center that will, for the first time, allow those in a wheelchair to independently navigate the park and even the river bank! Emanating from these paved paths in either direction are gravel paths that an ambitious wheelchair user can explore. And the further you get from this high-use area, the primitive dirt trails will remain for all to enjoy.

This game of preserving, managing, restoring and naturalizing public green space in our fair city is not for the faint of heart. If you accommodate one group you often alienate another. Decisions are made, but implementing plans can sometimes take years! This means that current users can feel left out of the process (users can join coalition groups here <http://www.milwaukeeivergreenway.org/coalition/>). It's a fine and tricky balancing act that is more art than science. We hope you all will come down and enjoy the growing results of our hard work. 🌱

## Get outside and Play... Doctor's Orders!

Continued from page 1

that introduce or improve recreation skills and safety, as well as an equipment sharing program that supports outdoor activities independent from programs at the Center.

Last year over 1000 children and 500 adults participated in boating education programs at the Center. Most of these programs were aimed at beginners, and helped to develop physical balance and strength, as well as interest in outdoor play. Combining all of our outdoor recreation programs, which includes rock climbing, hiking, skiing and snowshoeing, over 6000 children and 1100 adults were taught how to enjoy these activities safely. Plus, all of the 23,000+ participants in our school partnership program take a walk outside during their program.

Once participants gain an appreciation of these outdoor activities, the Center's equipment lending program makes them affordable for families. We have provided members over 4000 tents, canoes, backpacks, bicycles, skis, snowshoes, tennis rackets, kayaks, lawn games and gardening equipment in one year! In the Menomonee Valley, where we just opened our doors, the community health study measures both how much time children spend playing outdoors and if their attitudes toward outdoor play will change because of our work there.

### Nutrition

On September 18th, the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel displayed a photo of a program where



children were about to taste vegetables which had been growing in their garden moments ago. Every week, the Young Scientists Club in Washington Park hosts Food Fridays, where students grow, harvest, prepare and eat vegetables from their gardens throughout the year. Food Fridays is fun, delicious and nutritious. With the launch of our new program database and website this past summer, it is now possible to search for our food programs, which last year had over 4000 participants, nearly 50% of which were kids. Food programs focus on fresh, local and healthy foods such as the one highlighted by the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel.

### Emotional health

Community health is not just about physical well-being; it also encompasses emotional and mental health. Our literature reviews show that people who have exposure to nature tend to also have less stress, aggression and anxiety. To get a sense of stress and aggression in

the community, over 150 hours of volunteer time was spent walking the neighborhood looking and listening for indicators, such as arguments, aggressive driving or disheveled homes or yards. Our hope is to see decreases in these indicators over time.

### Delinquency

Neighborhoods that are stressed also tend to have an uptick in delinquent behaviors such as theft and vandalism. As we move forward with the health study, we hope to see decreases in graffiti, littering, broken windows and evidence of illegal drug and alcohol use. While we do not yet have statistics, we do have stories, and here are two of them:

In June, students who were setting a rocky ambush for bicyclists on the s-curve trail that extends from the Hank Aaron State Trail into the Silver City neighborhood were invited inside so that these same rocks could be added to a beautiful mural that is now a permanent fixture of our Menomonee Valley branch. They not only cleaned up the trail, making safe passage for bicyclers, but they were able to engage in an activity that benefited their community.

In September, a couple of visitors had bikes stolen while visiting the Center. Using our security equipment, we found that the thieves were youth familiar to our staff. We were then able to engage the youth's entire family in righting the wrong and learning about what it means to be part of an engaged, healthy community. These two small examples of what positive engagement with adults can do to help youth understand their own influence in bettering their community.

Exercise, nutrition, emotional well-being and lawfulness are just some of the components that lead to a healthier community. We invite you to become engaged in this important work, as learners, supporters, volunteers and members. As a community we can combat "indoor sickness" and improve community health. So, let's all get outside and play... doctor's orders! 🌿

## Where's the "Thank You" list?

Our list of supporters has grown so large that we can no longer print it in the newsletter. The list can instead be found on our website at [www.urbanecologycenter.org/thankyoulist](http://www.urbanecologycenter.org/thankyoulist). Many thanks to the local foundations, corporations and individuals who have donated to the Center within the last two months. We are extremely grateful for your patience during this transition.

We thank all of you who have become members, renewed your membership, given a gift membership or made a donation to our mission. We work hard to recognize all our supporters accurately. Contact Cassie at 964-8505 or [cmordini@urbanecologycenter.org](mailto:cmordini@urbanecologycenter.org) if your name has not appeared as you expected.

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 page 14 for the easy to use form, visit our website at [www.urbanecologycenter.org](http://www.urbanecologycenter.org) or call the Center at (414) 964-8505.

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

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

## LOCATIONS & HOURS

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](mailto:jferschinger@urbanecologycenter.org)

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

### Washington Park

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

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

[www.UrbanEcologyCenter.org](http://www.UrbanEcologyCenter.org)

Find us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter!

## Join our community Today!

### Membership

**Did you know you can give a donation, join or renew your membership securely online? Visit [www.urbanecologycenter.org](http://www.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](http://www.UrbanEcologyCenter.org)

**FEATURED EVENT**



**WINTER SOLSTICE  
CANDLELIGHT WALK**

Celebrate the Winter Solstice. Join us for a guided candlelit walk through Riverside Park and 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 half hour.

**(RP) Saturday, December 15 | 7 - 9 pm**

For adults, teens and families  
Free - donations appreciated  
(Non-members: \$5)

SPONSORED BY



DeWAN DENTAL WELLNESS

FSC logo

## IN THIS ISSUE

### MILWAUKEE RIVER TRAILS GETTING A FACELIFT

By Ken Leinbach, Kim Forbeck and Tim Vargo  
*"Ever since the North Avenue Dam was removed in 1996, the Milwaukee River Corridor from Estabrook to downtown has gone through a remarkable transformation..."*

### GET OUTSIDE AND PLAY... DOCTOR'S ORDERS!

By Beth Heller  
*"Who knew that when our parents told us to go outside and play they were dispensing medical advice?..."*

### STARTING FRESH

By Laurel Cutright  
*"My job was to encourage them to look, feel, run, roll... whatever they had to do to enjoy the park..."*

### GIVING THANKS

By Glenna Holstein  
*"I am humbled by the generosity of our community, which reflects a deep commitment to the work we are doing..."*

### 18 NEW FACES

By Jamie Ferschinger  
*"During their time with us we watch the Outdoor Leaders learn about themselves, their community and the world..."*

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



Volunteers helped band  
**over 200 birds**  
this past fall