



## Fact Sheet: The Urban Ecology Center's Sustainable Facility at Riverside Park

The Urban Ecology Center's award-winning, state-of-the-art facility at the Riverside Park location serves as a model for green building projects everywhere. Located in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, the building is an environmental community center that provides childhood education and adult community activities. The Center connects the street, the adjacent Riverside Park, and the city bike path. The Center's building demonstrates practical, replicable design ideas and techniques.

A few of the Riverside Park building's sustainable features include:

- **Re-used Materials** – Many of the items and materials within the building have a unique story and origin, from the chairs made out of sustainable harvested wood to the hardwood floors and brick chimney repurposed from old buildings. Using recycled and durable building materials reduces waste and brings a sense of warmth and community to the building.
- **A Recycled Exterior** – The building exterior features galvalume siding and roofing. It is made from 80 percent recycled material, should last more than 50 years with no care and is 100 percent recyclable for future use.
- **Solar Panels** – As visitors climb the building's 75-foot observation tower made of a recycled steel latticework, they will see 256 solar photovoltaic panels producing 44kW of power annually (44,000 watts). Inverters allow power to go directly into the area power grid and provide power to the Urban Ecology Center.
- **Green Roof Garden** – A live, growing green roof sits atop the building and manages excess water runoff by keeping it out of the sewers, insulates the garage, and reduces temperature gain from the roof. It is also a sensory garden of native plants and directs overflow water to an on-site pond through underground pipes.
- **Rainwater Restrooms** – The restrooms at the UEC use rainwater to flush toilets and let users choose between a half tank or full tank flush. Three 350-gallon stainless steel water cisterns collect rainwater that falls on the roof and store it for use. This unique restroom system has even been featured on the *Travel Channel*.



### **Fact Sheet: Things to Do at the Urban Ecology Center's Riverside Park Facility**

The building at the Urban Ecology Center's Riverside Park site was designed with the teaching style of the Center's naturalists in mind. The classrooms are enhanced by open, adaptable spaces that can be used for a wide variety of activities. Some activities that visitors to the UEC will experience include:

- **Milwaukee on the Map** – The blue and brown floor in the lobby represents a to-scale map of Southeastern Wisconsin, depicting three major rivers and Lake Michigan. Visitors can connect more than 50 two-foot square puzzle pieces on top of the floor to make a 30-foot aerial photo of the city.
- **Native Animals** – The Native Wisconsin Animal Room houses painted and snapping turtles, snakes and bullfrogs – all found in Riverside Park. A 16-foot long series of river system tanks contain a cross section of aquatic life found in the Milwaukee River.
- **Surprise!** – Visitors can discover hidden activities like the stream slide with a secret entrance on the north side of the building the Camouflage Room door which is hidden in the wall.
- **The View from the Top** – From the 75-foot Observation Tower, children and adults can take in the views from river to lake and observe many species of birds that can be found on this key migration route. The Tower houses a weather station and becomes a telescope observatory on starry nights. It's also home to the largest outdoor rock climbing wall in the Milwaukee area.
- **From the Inside Out** – The Center has a direct connection to the Milwaukee County Oak Leaf Trail. A tunnel leads to a bike patio with a drinking fountain for bikers, walkers and their dogs. The facility provides a daily safety presence, continuing the Center's founding purpose of crime prevention.
- **Do-It-Yourself Fun** – The UEC also offers a free equipment-lending program to members, which includes canoes, kayaks, skis, snowshoes, nets, binoculars, microscopes, roto-tillers, extension ladders, shovels and more.
- **Bookworms Welcome** – The Tula Erskine Memorial Library, decorated to reflect the life of Gertrude (Tula) Erskine, an early member of the Center and accomplished mycologist and artist, is the hub for study and research.



Tours of the Riverside Park Urban Ecology Center facility are available weekly. For more information about the Urban Ecology Center or to schedule a guided tour, visit [www.urbanecologycenter.org](http://www.urbanecologycenter.org) or call (414) 964-8505.

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