



The Dance of Whales — The Dance of Life

by Ken Leinbach, Executive Director

I awoke alone just before sunrise, happy for the warmth of my sleeping bag. The eastern horizon was aglow where ocean met sky. Purple, peach and pink all mixed up into one intense remarkable color. I rolled over and rested my chin in my hands to take in the beauty before my eyes. There was hardly a breath of wind on the shore of this small, isolated cove on Isla Espiritu Santo in the Sea of Cortez.

My mind was awake, open and clear.

I heard a soft sound ... not so much an interruption, but an intrinsic part of the moment. Sound focused to sight and I became a witness to the joyful dance of life. First a smooth ripple, then a graceful glistening black mound rose impossibly high from the sea followed by a deep primordial breath. Another ripple, another slightly smaller mound, another breath. Massive flukes rose up — quiet — save for the dripping water from the tails' edge. I could hear the drips! Then they were gone.

Silence and awe filled the space. The horizon of pure color brightened. I rested in expectant beauty.

Another ripple, black mound and primordial breath. The big one again! In close proximity, still water suddenly boiled and erupted with a loud PBSSHHH! The second whale exploded out of the water launching its body straight up to a shocking height, twisting in the early morning air before — KABLAM — body met water in a spray of delight. I felt the reverberation through the ground. Holy cow!

Seconds later, silence with a widening circle of swells was the only evidence of the glorious moment before. Wow.

The horizon was electric with light ... the sun was imminent.

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The Arboretum's First Spring

by Beth Heller, Senior Director of Education and Strategic Planning

Every spring, Center staff members have a friendly competition of "firsts." As the snow melts, folks vie to be the first person to see a red-wing blackbird, chipmunk or spring flower. But the most important "first" to me is found in the Milwaukee Rotary Centennial Arboretum. This is the first year we'll begin to see the results of our hard work last fall.

All of Wisconsin's ecosystems are represented in the Arboretum, from soil make-up to wildflowers to tree species. This amazing new asset for the city was built for everyone to enjoy. Paths are wheelchair accessible, "imaginature" stations provide places for children to climb and crawl and the ecosystem design is sure to interest the novice and the expert naturalist. There will also be a new trail to explore connecting the Oak Leaf Trail to the southern edge of the Arboretum along North Avenue.

Here are a few things to watch for:

Spring flowers:

Thousands of wildflowers have been planted throughout the arboretum and this season will begin to reveal the benefits of that great undertaking. For example, look for both rare and common species of showy three-leaved trilliums. More humorously named flowers such as Jack-in-the-pulpit and Dutchman's-breeches have spring flowers named for their unique look. The spotted leaves of the Trout lily provide a backdrop for this more common but beautiful white flower. Large leaves of the May apple (pictured above) look like giant umbrellas, each



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Branch Highlights

RIVERSIDE PARK

If you are walking through the Arboretum and notice areas of burned land, don't be alarmed. We are conducting a prescribed burn to manage the open plant communities, improve wildlife habitat, reduce invasive plant species and return nutrients to the soil. Watch as an even more vibrant plant community emerges.

WASHINGTON PARK

What a winter! We loved it, but now that the ice on the lagoon has thawed, it is time to take to the water! Come see our Visitor Services Specialist Terrance Davis and learn how members who have taken a water safety class can check out a canoe or kayak. Great times out on the water!

MENOMONEE VALLEY

It's our first planting season in Three Bridges Park! Our Land Stewardship team has an ambitious goal of getting 8500 herbacious plants and shrubs into the ground by the end of June and we need your help! There are plenty of opportunities to get involved. Hope to see you in the park with a spade and gloves!

Research Opportunities for Volunteers

Our parks are filled with more life than you could imagine in an urban setting. All these insects, amphibians and mammals are being studied by our researchers with the assistance of our Citizen Scientists. With so much to do, we need your help!

Below are the projects we are currently working on. Feel free to come and become a Citizen Scientist.

Workshops:

Acoustic Bat Monitoring

Wednesday, May 7,
7:30 - 9:30pm, at Riverside Park

Frog & Turtle Monitoring

Thursday, May 8, 6 - 7:30pm at Riverside Park

Research Data Workshop

(data collection and analysis)
Tuesday, May 27, 6 - 7:30pm at Riverside Park

Dragonfly and Damselfly Workshop

Thursday, May 29, 6 - 7:25pm at Riverside Park

Mammal Monitoring Workshop

Tuesday, June 10, 6pm - 7:30pm
at Menomonee Valley

Work group/planning:

Invertebrate Monitoring Plan Group

The Citizen Science team was awarded a Wisconsin DNR Citizen-based monitoring grant to implement a volunteer-led invertebrate monitoring program. If you are interested in helping create the plan, come to one of the meeting dates listed below:
May 7, 21, June 3 and 17, at Riverside Park

Volunteer Invertebrate Monitoring Plan Group Appreciation Party

Celebrate the completion of the Center's long-term invertebrate monitoring plan! Please bring a dish to pass.
Friday, June 27, 6 - 8pm at Riverside Park

We look forward to working with you! For more information contact Jennifer Callaghan jcallaghan@urbanecologycenter.org.

DROPLETS

LEARN MORE ABOUT THESE TOPICS ON OUR WEBSITE

- **Save the date! More than a Pretty Place Celebration, June 7th at our Menomonee Valley branch.**

Urban parks are not just pretty, they are critical to the health and well-being of our communities. Celebrate the completion of "More Than a Pretty Place," a two year community health study by Medical College of Wisconsin, Urban Ecology Center, UWM's Center for Urban Initiatives and Research and Menomonee Valley Partners, and discover what the collaborative study shows about nature and our health.

Keynote Speaker, Cheryl Charles, Ph.D., President and CEO Emeritus of the Children & Nature Network. Cheryl will speak about the growing disconnect between children and nature, the indicators of what Richard Louv calls "nature-deficit disorder," and the scientific as well as common-sense evidence of the benefits to children from direct experience with nature on a daily basis in their lives.

- **Wish List.** Visit urbanecologycenter.org/wishlist for an expanded list.

Riverside Park
iPod - any model/any year
Children's books

Washington Park
8-foot folding tables
Large easel

Menomonee Valley
Unglazed clay pots, between 6-10" in diameter
Ceramic tiles 10"-12" (glazed or unglazed)

Join us for a summer night of celebration to support the Urban Ecology Center's mission

7th Annual Summer solstice soiree

Saturday, June 21 | 6:30PM

AT Riverside Park

Tickets are \$150

See page 6 for details



Credits:



Carijean Buhk
Editor

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

Contributing writers: Laurel Cutright, Beth Heller, Glenna Holstein, Willie Karidis, Ken Leinbach and Miguel Santos.

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Thank You to Our Contributing Members

Many thanks to the local foundations, corporations and individuals who have contributed 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.

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

MULTI-GENERATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

Everyone, no matter their age, can teach, help and learn at the Urban Ecology Center!



MENTORING AT THE CENTER INTERACTIVE, MULTI-GENERATIONAL TEACHING

Environmental Educators

Summer Interns

High School Outdoor Leaders

Summer Campers

Research shows two things make a person environmentally aware – constant contact with nature early in life and a mentor who demonstrates positive behavior toward the environment. With this research in mind, we train interns to be mentors to high schoolers, who in turn become mentors to our Summer Campers.



Participants of all ages!

We have volunteers **ages 4 to 92** who help with everything from land stewardship to teaching!

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



Rivers of Fun

by Laurel Cutright, Environmental Educator

Spring is always a time of excitement and of release. As the snow melts and the birds return, I feel a sense of relief from the cooped-up restlessness of winter. The students I work with seem to have the same experience, though of course in a more exaggerated way. After a winter in often windowless classrooms, they are as wiggly physically as I am mentally.

The typical structure of our classes with the Neighborhood Environmental Education Project, our school program, is to do one or two short activities inside before heading out into the park. Often during the winter we spend a little more time inside, but we always make sure to explore and stretch our legs, even in the cold. Sometimes this is the only real outside time our students get all week.

During a recent field trip with a second

grade class, the teacher told me that they had been having indoor recess for months, and hadn't had gym class either. During the inside activities about the water cycle, the students were enthusiastic, but once we got outside they were unable to contain their energy. They were practically vibrating, and I knew that the planned activities for our hike weren't going to happen the way I thought.

It was an optimistic, 40-degree day. The maple sap was flowing and the ice covering most of Washington Park was breaking up. Channels of water were rushing downhill through ravines of mud and slush. The students immediately rushed over to these "rivers," shouting and splashing. Some wanted to follow the river uphill, while others started tossing leaves in and watching them race away. Several students started constructing a small dam out of sticks

and rocks, and all at once the entire class was working together to alter the rushing water with chunks of snow, fallen branches and even goose scat. The teacher and I simply sat by answering questions and providing encouragement here and there, but mostly we just watched as the class explored the concept of water on their own. Not only were they learning about the planned topic of the class, they were practicing engineering, cooperation and creativity. It was exactly the sort of outdoor play time we strive to encourage on each trip to the Urban Ecology Center, but I had never seen it more alive. I couldn't have planned a better trip or activity than the one the students came up with on their own, at the sight of ice melting on a sidewalk. They were breaking free of winter, entering a state of pure, exuberant springtime. 🌸



Community Gardens in the Menomonee Valley

by Glenna Holstein, Branch Manager - Menomonee Valley

Five years ago, the Urban Ecology Center, the Menomonee Valley Partners, and Layton Boulevard West Neighbors gathered several groups of folks who live and work near the Menomonee Valley and shared with them a crazy idea — converting an old rail yard into a park. They asked the group: "what would you like to see in this park?" They received a lot of answers, but one thing that came up again and again was a desire for space to grow food. The neighborhood just south of the Menomonee Valley is the most densely populated area in the state, which means lots of people and little space for gardening.

Based on these conversations in the nascent stages of Three Bridges Park, plans for the park included community gardens. It has taken the involvement of many partners to get the gardens ready to go, and even though the construction is almost

finished, the real work is just beginning.

I think this is a fascinating project. Three Bridges Park is a pretty unorthodox choice for a location for community gardens. It's about a quarter mile from street access and there isn't a water source nearby. (Sounds about as crazy as most of our ideas at the Center, doesn't it?) However, the desire to have the gardens was so strong that we decided to make them happen despite these challenges.

"Despite" is actually the wrong word. Something we are working on at the Center is to view limits as opportunities, to constantly strive toward a mind-set of abundance rather than scarcity. In a way, these gardens are a microcosm that represents some of the challenges we face as an entire society and they help us practice some of the strategies we need to meet those challenges. These gardens will require us to think creatively,

to place value on community connections, and shift our perspective on how we spend our time.

So, I'd like to invite all of you into this process with us. This June, we are opening 15 Community Garden plots for our pilot year. We are excited to work together with our gardeners to figure out the best ways to make them successful. Two resources that I know to be abundant in the Urban Ecology Center community are creativity and generosity, and I look forward to seeing how we can work together to make yet another "crazy" idea come to life!

If you are interested in a garden plot or know someone in our neighborhood who might be, please get in touch at (414) 431-2940 or gholstein@urbanecologycenter.org. 🌸

MAY & JUNE

Quick Guide

An abbreviated listing of what's happening at the Urban Ecology Center. Find full descriptions and register online at www.urbanecologycenter.org/calendar

FOURTH ANNUAL
GREEN BIRDING CHALLENGE

(RP) SATURDAY, MAY 10 | 6AM 1PM
FOR TEAMS OF 3 | \$25 PER PERSON (MINI-TEAMS ARE \$50)
register at urbanecologycenter.org/greenbirdingchallenge

Join us for a fun day of green birding to support research at the Urban Ecology Center. Teams will bike, walk or sit to discover the most birds. All experience levels are welcome.

STATIONARY BIRDING

BIRDING ON FOOT

BIRDING BY BIKE

MINI-CHALLENGE
FOR FAMILIES & NOVICES



SATURDAY
MAY 24
9am - 2pm

Our High School Outdoor Leaders created a survival course just for teens that runs through the urban wilderness of Washington Park. Come learn more about nature, your friends and yourself!

(WP) For teams of four teens and one adult
\$40 per team | Register at
urbanecologycenter.org/teensurvivalchallenge

for teens

led by teens

- ✕ *hiking*
- ✕ *canoeing*
- ✕ *fire building*
- ✕ *puzzles*
- ✕ *team building*
- ✕ *biking*
- ✕ *and more!*

the 7th Annual
Summer solstice soiree

Saturday, June 21 | 6:30PM
AT Riverside Park

Tickets are \$150



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

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

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

RIVERSIDE PARK



Looking for a fun night out with the family? You're in luck! On **May 31** we will be hosting the first ever **Urban Ecology Center Family Mystery Dinner**.

Bring your family for dinner, activities, and a performance of *Clancy Shrew and the Tale of the Vanishing Log*. Sign up your family today and help us solve the mystery! Also, explore "The Secret Life of Artists: Cultivating an Artistic Practice" with Thea Kovac on June 28.

— Jamie Ferschinger,
Branch Manager - Riverside Park

WASHINGTON PARK



One of the best parts about spring is the beautiful flowers which surprise us each year. Spring ephemeral wildflowers bloom for only a short time during the spring and are a welcome sign of the season. Help us **Hunt for Spring Wildflowers** in nearby Jacobus Park on May 17 to learn about and find these early, quick blooming plants!

— Willie Karidis,
Branch Manager - Washington Park

MENOMONEE VALLEY



We have lots of ways to celebrate the return of warm weather in the Valley! Help us plant thousands of plants during **Dig it, Plant it, Grow it** or **Community Planting Day**.

Get back into biking with **Advanced Savvy City Cycling for Ladies** and stop at our **Bike to Work Week Commuter Table** along the Hank Aaron State Trail (HAST). And, speaking of the HAST, get yourself in shape for the HAST Run/Walk with our **HAST 5K Training!**

— Glenna Holstein,
Branch Manager - Menomonee Valley

Quick Guide

Preschool Programs

Kindernature:

Spring Discovery ♿

Explore nature through self-led, spring-themed activity stations.

(RP) Sats., May 3, 17, Jun. 7 & 14 | 9:30 - 11am
For children ages 3-5 accompanied by an adult | \$5 (Nonmembers: \$7)

Toddling Into Nature:

Water Wonders ♿

Discover the wonderful qualities of water through outdoor and indoor play, stories and activities. Please register by May 19th.

(RP) Thu., May 15 | 10:00 - 11:30am

For families with children ages 3-5 | \$5/child (Nonmembers: \$7/child)

Toddling Into Nature:

Life in the Pond ♿

Come meet, and even hold, live water animals! Grab a net and learn how to catch and identify critters in our lagoon.

(WP) Sat., Jun. 14 | 10 - 11:30am
For families with children ages 3-5 | \$5/person (Nonmembers: \$7/person)

Girl Scouts: Bird Tracker

Discover how birds interact in nature.

(MV) Sat., May 10 | 9am - noon
For Cadettes, grades 4-5 | \$14 | To register, please visit www.gswise.org

Science Saturdays and Sundays ♿

Come try these self-led activities. Theme: "Creepy Crawly Critters!"

(RP) Self-led, drop-in program available Every Sat. | 10am - 4pm and Every Sun. | 1 - 4pm
For everyone
Free - donations appreciated

E.B. Garner's 17th

Annual Fishing Day ♿

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

(WP) Sat., Jun. 7 | 8am - 4pm
For families | Free - donations appreciated

Mural Making with Jeanette Fellows ♿

In collaboration with the Native American Awareness Project and Milwaukee Public Theater

Join our Young Scientists as they work with artist Jeanette Fellows to create a multi-paneled mural.

(MV) Sat., Jun. 14, 21 & 28 | 1 - 4pm
For children and teens ages 5 and older | Free - donations appreciated

Vermicomposting 101 ♿

Put your kitchen scraps to use by maintaining a worm bin.

(MV) Sat., Jun. 14 | 2 - 3:30pm
For families with children ages 5-12 years old | Free for Young Scientists Club members (Nonmembers: \$5)

Fun with Fishing on the Menomonee River

No experience or equipment necessary.

(MV) Sat., Jun. 21 | 10 - 11:30am
For families with children ages 7 and up | Adults: \$6 (Nonmembers: \$9) Children: \$4 (Nonmembers: \$7)

Paddle Under the Summer Sun ♿

Did you know that first day of summer is also the longest day of the year? Celebrate with some afternoon fun in the sun. Enjoy canoeing and a bonfire.

(WP) Sat., Jun. 21 | 1 - 4pm
For everyone | Free - donations appreciated

E.B. Garner Fishing Club ♿

Learn techniques from local fishing teacher E.B. Garner. Equipment provided.

(WP) Wed., Jun. 25 | 4 - 7pm
For everyone | Free - donations appreciated

Highlighted programs

Family Overnight Camping Trip

Ready for some family fun? Come on an camping trip including a hike, naturalist program and campfire. Meals and tents will be provided, but please bring own bedding. Transportation may be available upon request. Registration required.

(RP) Sat., Jun. 7, 1pm - Sun., Jun. 8, 11am

For families | **Families of: 2-3 people:** \$60 (Nonmembers: \$70); **4-5 people:** \$80 (Nonmembers: \$90); **6 or more people:** \$120 (Nonmembers \$130)

Family Mystery Dinner: *Clancy Shrew and the Tale of the Vanishing Log* ♿

Join us for a pasta dinner and costumed character skit where you'll help solve the mystery of *Clancy Shrew and the Vanishing Log*. After, we'll head outdoors for more fun. Space is limited, registration is required by May 28th.

(RP) Sat., May 31 | 5 - 7pm

Recommended for families with children ages 4-8, but all are welcome |

Families of: 2-3 people: \$60 (Nonmembers: \$70); **4-5 people:** \$80 (Nonmembers: \$90); **6 or more people:** \$120 (Nonmembers: \$130)

Community Planting Day

Help plant native plants in Three Bridges Park. Dress for the weather and bring gloves and trowels if you can. Meet at the Center.

(MV) Sat., Jun. 7 | 9:30 - 11:30am

For adults and accompanied children ages 6 and up | Free - donations appreciated

Grandkids in the Park

Birds ♿

Join us at the Washington Park Senior Center as we learn bird identification skills. To register, contact Katie at (414) 933-2332.

(WP) Wed., Jun. 25 | 1:30 - 3pm

For grandparents and their grandkids | Free - donations accepted

Grandkids in the Park

Incredible Insects ♿

Search the prairie behind the Washington Park Senior Center for six-legged friends who hop, crawl and fly. To register, contact Katie at (414) 933-2332.

(WP) Thu., Jun. 26 | 1 - 2:30pm

For grandparents and their grandkids | Free - donations accepted

Animal Feeding ♿

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

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

(RP) Every Sat. except Jun. 21 | 1pm
For everyone | Free - donations appreciated

Young Scientists Club ♿

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

(RP) Every Mon. except

May 26 | 4 - 5:30pm
For ages 5 through 12 | \$10 annual fee (Plus suggested daily donation - \$5)

(WP) Every Tue. - Fri. | 4 - 6pm

and Every Sat. | 1 - 4pm
For kids ages 7-12 | \$10 annual membership

(MV) Every Tue. & Thu. | 4 - 6pm

and Every Sat. | 1 - 4pm
For ages 5-12 | \$10 annual membership

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

Naturalist Skills Series

Plant Communities of Riverside Park

Explore Riverside Park's plant communities to learn their distinguishing features, inhabitants, importance and interactions in the park's ecosystem. Dress for the weather.
(RP) Sat., May 3 | 10 - 11:30am
For adults | \$7 (Nonmembers: \$10) (NEEP and Docent Volunteers: \$5)

Stems and Stalks

We'll teach tips for identifying common plants and examine plant physiology to demystify how botanical herbs "eat," "breathe" and reproduce. Dress for the weather.

(RP) Sun., Jun. 22 | 2:30 - 4pm
For adults | \$7 (Nonmembers: \$10) (NEEP and Docent Volunteers: \$5)

Riverside Update and Community Forum

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

(RP) Tue., May 6 | 6:30 - 8pm
For everyone | Free - donations appreciated

Milwaukee County Big Bird Day

Help count as many birds as we can in a single day! We'll visit birding hot spots until we drop. Binoculars provided. Bring a lunch.

(WP) Thu., May 8 | 8am - 5pm
For adults, teens and families | Free - donations appreciated

Big Biking Bird Day

This is the green version of our Big Bird Day (see above). Bring a lunch, a bike and binoculars. If you don't have a bike or binoculars, just borrow ours!

(MV) Thu., May 15 | 8am - 5pm
For adults, teen and families | Free - donations appreciated

Find full descriptions and details about these programs at www.urbanecologycenter.org/calendar

All Urban Ecology Centers will be closed on Monday, May 26 in observance of the holiday. In addition, our Riverside Park branch will close at noon on Saturday, June 21.

Sustainable Coffee Tasting

Join the MKE Coffee Guild as you taste locally-roasted coffee from around the world.

(RP) Sats., May 10 & Jun. 14 | 10 - 11am
For adults | \$8 (Nonmembers: \$10)

The Secret Life of Artists: Cultivating an Artistic Practice with Thea Kovac

Together we will explore the workings of an artistic practice and ways to keep it alive. Through discussion and playful exercises, we will explore the cyclic nature of the creative process and how to cultivate a fertile imagination. Registration required by Jun. 23.

(RP) Sat., Jun. 28 | 10am - 4pm
For adults | \$75 (Nonmembers: \$85)

Native Plant Sale

Prairie Future Seed Company will be selling over 60 different species of native prairie, savanna and woodland perennials. A portion of the profits from the sale will go to the Center.

(MV) Sat., May 10 | 9am - 1pm and
(RP) Sat., May 31 | 9am - 1pm
For everyone | Free - donations accepted

Banning DDT: How Citizen Activists in Wisconsin Led the Way

In December 1968, DDT went on trial in Madison. Author Bill Berry details how citizens, scientists, reporters and conservationists drew attention to the harmful effects of "the miracle pesticide." Book signing to follow.

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

Clay Pot Garden Irrigation Workshop

Mike and Paulette Flynn of GreenQuest will teach a centuries-old method to irrigate your garden, conserve water and save time in this hands-on workshop.

(RP) Sat., May 17 | 10 - 11:30am
(MV) Sat., May 17 | 2 - 3:30pm
For adults | \$10 (Nonmembers: \$12)

Hunt for Spring Wildflowers

Join us to learn more about these short blooming flowers and help us hunt for them in nearby Jacobus Park! Transportation provided.

(WP) Sat., May 17 | 10am - noon
For adults and accompanied children | Adults: \$6 (Nonmembers: \$9) Children: \$4 (Nonmembers: \$6)

Photo Phenology

Take photographs and draw pictures of the natural area around the Center.

(MV) Sat., May 31 & Jun. 28 | 10 - 11:30am
For adults, teens and families | Free - donations appreciated

Milwaukee Centennial Arboretum Docent-Led Tour

Learn about the history, ecology and community involvement surrounding the creation of this beautiful park.

(RP) Sats., May 17, 29, Jun. 14 & 28 | 10:30 - 11:30am
Wed., May 21 | 10 - 11am
Thu., May 29 | 5:30 - 6:30pm
Wed., Jun. 18 | 5:30 - 6:30pm
Thu., Jun. 26 | 10 - 11am
For everyone | Free - donations appreciated (Nonmembers: \$5) For large group tours, please contact Margaret Cope, (414) 964-8505 x138.

Introduction to Safe Food Preservation

Learn the benefits and challenges of hot-water-bath canning. There will be a demonstration of canning tomato products, jams/jellies and pickles.

(RP) Mon., May 19 | 7 - 8pm
For adults | \$15 (Nonmembers: \$20)

Food Preservation: Freezer Jams and Jellies

Turn the first fruits of the season into simple freezer jams and jellies. In this demonstration, you will see how easy it is to put up spring and summer fruits using sugar and other sweeteners.

(RP) Mon., Jun. 16 | 7 - 8pm
For adults | \$15 (Nonmembers: \$20)

From Beak to Tail: All About the Life of Birds

Join us for an in-depth look into the bird ecology.

(MV) Thu., May 22 | 5:30 - 7pm
(RP) Mon., Jun. 23 | 6:30 - 8pm
For adults | \$5 (Nonmembers: \$10)

Wisconsin Frog & Toad Survey Monitoring

Help us collect data for the Wisconsin DNR Frog and Toad Survey. We'll listen for our amphibian friends at 10 sites along on the east side of Milwaukee.

(RP) Wed., May 28 | 8 - 10pm
For adults | Free - donations appreciated

Taming and Training Fruit Trees

Come learn how to encourage high fruit loads in your tree while building a solid structure necessary for a long and prosperous life.

(WP) Sat., Jun. 14 | 9am - noon
For adults | \$10 (Nonmembers: \$15)

Participatory Photo Mapping

Speaker: Samuel Dennis Jr., University of Wisconsin
Tue., Jun. 17 | 7 - 8:30pm
For adults | \$5 (Nonmembers: \$10)

Campfire Cooking Series: Desserts and Snacks

Practice the art of campfire cooking with simple, yummy desserts and snacks. Registration is required by 5pm on June 19th

(RP) Fri., Jun. 20 | 5:30 - 7pm
For everyone | Adults: \$7 (Nonmembers: \$10) Children: \$5 (Nonmembers: \$8)

Menomonee Valley Walking Tours

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

HOMESCHOOL SERIES

Homeschool Series:

Citizen Scientists

Be citizen scientists by completing mini research projects on flowers, insects and birds. Then present your findings for your parents in the last session. Registration required.

Schedule:
(WP) Tue., May 6, **(MV)** Tues., May 20,
(RP) Tues., Jun. 3, **(RP)** Tues., Jun. 17
1 - 3pm
For children ages 5 and older | \$7 (Nonmembers: \$10)

Quick Guide

Open Climbs

Enjoy climbing our three story rock wall. Equipment is provided and trained belayers are on hand to assist.

(RP) Every Sun. except May 25 | 2 - 4pm,

Every Tue. | 6 - 8pm and

Every Wed. | 4:30 - 6:30pm

For adults, teens, and families | Adults: \$10 (Nonmembers: \$12) Children: \$8 (Nonmembers: \$10) Climbing passes available for in-person purchase.

Free Open Climb

Come and climb — you might just get hooked! We're offering a free climbing session once a month.

(RP) Sun., Jun. 1 | 2 - 4pm

For everyone | Free - donations appreciated

Water Safety Course

Take an on-land course and get out on the water. This training or training through one of our scheduled trips, is a requirement of our equipment lending membership benefit.

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

(RP) Every Mon. except May 26 | 6 - 6:30pm

(MV) Every Friday | 5 - 5:30pm

Every Sun. | 1 - 1:30pm

For adults | Free - donations appreciated (Nonmembers: \$5)

Teaching Safe Bicycling

Copponsored by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and the Wisconsin Bike Federation

Learn how to teach bike safety to kids. Bring a bike and helmet.

(MV) Sat., May 3 | 9am - 4:30pm

For adults | Free - donations appreciated

Advanced Savvy City Cycling for Women

"Share & Be Aware" with the Bike Federation and the Bella Donnas. We cover riding laws and techniques. Bring your bike and helmet.

(MV) Wed., May 7 | 6 - 8pm

For adults and teens | Free - donations appreciated

Bike-to-Work Week Commuter Station

Stop by the Valley Passage (37th St. Bridge) for a treat and a coffee. Special thanks to Colectivo Coffee Roasters and the Bike Federation.

(MV) May 12 - 16 | 7 - 9am

For bike commuters | Free - donations appreciated

Hank Aaron State Trail 5K Training

Join us as we use Three Bridges Park and the surrounding community as training grounds for running/walking, stretching and breathing exercises.

(MV) Sats., May 17, 31, Jun.

14 & 28 | 9:30 - 10:30am

For adults and teens | Free - donations appreciated

Birding the Milwaukee River

Look for migrant birds and early nesters as we paddle on the upper stretches of the Milwaukee River. Bring a lunch. Equipment provided.

(RP) Sat., May 31 | 8am - 5pm

For adults | \$45 (Nonmembers: \$50)

Canoeing Basics

Learn canoeing techniques on the still, quiet waters of the Washington Park Lagoon. All skill levels welcome.

(WP) Sats., May 31 & Jun.

28 | 11am - noon

For adults and accompanied children

| Adults: \$6 (Nonmembers: \$9) Children: \$4 (Nonmembers: \$7)

Milwaukee River Paddle: Kletszch Park to Estabrook Park

Discover urban waterway from Kletszch Park to the dam in Estabrook Park with special attention to the remediation project at Lincoln Park. Meet at Kletszch Park. Equipment provided. Registration required by Jun. 6th.

(RP) Sun., Jun. 8 | 1 - 4pm

For adults and teens | \$20 (Nonmembers: \$25)

River Rhythms Paddle

Join us for a fun evening paddle to Pere Marquette Park to enjoy live music. Equipment provided. Meet at the Milwaukee Rowing Club Boathouse (1990 N. Commerce St.). To register non-paddling kids, contact Lesley Sheridan at lesheridan@urbanecologycenter.org.

(RP) Weds., Jun 11 &

25 | 6:30 - 10pm

For adults and families | Adults: \$15 (Nonmembers: \$20) Paddling kids: \$7 (Nonmembers: \$10) Kids under 10 who do not paddle: Free - donations appreciated

Lumberjack Kayak and Brunch

Paddle to Hubbard Park Lodge for a family style brunch. Meet at the Lodge parking lot. Breakfast included. Registration and nonrefundable payment required by Jun. 12th at 5pm.

(RP) Sun., Jun. 15 | 9am - 1pm

For adults and teens | \$35 (Nonmembers: \$40)

Martial Arts with Above the Clouds

Hosted by Above the Clouds, this class teaches youth respect, discipline and self-confidence. Register at abovethecloudsmilwaukee.com or at the door.

(MV) Every Wed. in May | 5 - 6pm

For youth ages 9-15 | Free - donations appreciated

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Volunteer Orientation

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

(RP) Sat., May 3 | 10:30am - noon

(RP) Fri., May 16 | 3 - 4:30pm

(RP) Wed., May 28 | 5:30 - 7pm

(RP) Sat., Jun. 7 | 10:30am - noon

(RP) Thu., Jun. 19 | 10:30am - noon

(RP) Fri., Jun. 27 | 3 - 4:30pm

(WP) Tue., May 6 | 4:30 - 5:30pm

(WP) Thu., May 22 | 5 - 6pm

(WP) Wed., Jun. 4 | 4:30 - 5:30pm

(WP) Tue., Jun. 24 | 4:30 - 5:30pm

(MV) Thu., May 1 | 5:30 - 7pm

(MV) Tue., May 13 | 5:30 - 7pm

(MV) Thu., Jun. 12 | 5:30 - 7pm

(MV) Thu., Jun. 26 | 5:30 - 7pm

For adults and teens | Free - donations appreciated

Weekly volunteer opportunities

Find these weekly events on the calendar on our website

Burdock Brigades

Compost Crew

Dig it, Plant it, Grow it

Forestry Fridays

Volunteer Papermaking

Volunteer Park Ranger Crew

Work Outside Wednesdays

Volunteer Belayer Training

Interested in helping with our rock climbing programs? Attend this training and learn climbing wall procedure and safety.

(RP) Sat., May 17 | 9:30am - 12:30pm

For adults and teens | Free - donations appreciated

Bird Banding

Help us study songbirds. Weather dependent, please contact Jennifer at jcallaghan@urbanecologycenter.org before attending.

(RP) Thu., May 1 | 5:15am - 12:30pm

(RP) Thu., May 15 | 5:15am - 12:30pm

(WP) Wed., May 7 | 5:15am - 12:30pm

(WP) Wed., May 28 | 5am - 12:30pm

(MV) Tue., May 6 | 5:15am - 12:30pm

(MV) Tue., May 20 | 5am - 12:30pm

For adults and accompanied children | Free - donations appreciated

INTEREST GROUPS

Photo Club

(RP) Thus., May 1 & Jun. 5 |

6:30 - 9pm

Urban Echo Poets

(RP) Thus., May 8 & Jun. 12 |

7 - 8:30pm

Urban Stargazers

(RP) Thus., May 8 & Jun. 12 |

7 - 8:30pm

Friends of Real Food: Potluck Dinner and Program

(RP) Weds., May 14 & Jun. 11 |

6 - 8pm

Faith and Ecology

(RP) Tues., May 20 & Jun. 17 |

7 - 8:30pm

Transition Milwaukee: All City Hub Meeting

(RP) Mons., May 26 & Jun. 23 |

6:30 - 8:30pm

Early Morning Birdwalks

(MV) Every Tue. | 8am

(WP) Every Wed. | 8am

(RP) Every Thu. | 8am

The Arboretum's First Spring

continued from page 1

shielding its flower. Sickie pod, Blue cohosh, Ladies slippers, Coreopsis and many more wildflowers are showing their colors this spring.

Cairns:

For those of you who have hiked in the western United States, some eastern states and even internationally, you may have seen trails marked by cairns: a small pile of rocks, clearly arranged by a person. A well laid out trail will have just enough cairns so that just as you think you might be about to stray from the trail, another will appear, giving both a sense of adventure and confidence. Inspired by the interaction many of the Center's staff and friends have enjoyed while following cairns, the Arboretum's cairns will mark the many entrances to this newly revitalized recreational area. You will be able to watch as these larger-than-life, some even bigger than a person, cairns are constructed

on the property near the Arboretum's parking lot. The boulders that are being used are native to Wisconsin and like a traditional cairn, they will mark the trails so that you will know when you are entering or exiting the Arboretum.

Tours:

Did you know that 49 trained volunteer docents are ready to give tours of the Milwaukee Rotary Centennial Arboretum? On a tour, you will discover what makes this arboretum unique and discover the vast array of people who today and throughout history have interacted with this beautiful land in the heart of our city. In addition, you'll meet wonderful people who are excited to explore with you and share what they've learned. Or, to discover hundreds of migratory and resident birds found here, you can join a Thursday morning bird walk or any of the birding workshops.

You can join one of our public tours, or give us a call for a private tour. With a few weeks' notice, we can schedule a tour to fit the schedule for your family, work colleagues, clubs, churches and more.

Want to learn more about what's happening, share an idea or meet others interested in this space? Please come to our **Riverside Update and Community Forum on May 6th** (see details on page 7), where you will learn more about the happenings at Riverside Park and will help shape the future activities of our Center.

If you haven't visited the Arboretum, or even if you've been here many times before, we invite you to watch our first spring as it unfolds. Take a docent tour, participate in a program, dig in the dirt as a volunteer and explore this ever-evolving landscape. 🌱



Build It!

by Miguel Santos, Environmental Educator

"Get out your hard hat! It's time to put some materials to the test. Stretch'em, soak'em, crush'em – use what you learned to construct something (a bridge, a bird nest or a building) to solve a problem."

This is the description for one of our school programs for second graders. We use the Three Little Pigs story as a reference. Students get to know about the properties of certain materials, then they are divided into groups to build up sturdy enough structures out of cups so as to withstand the wolves' huffs and puffs. Who says there are no wolves in Milwaukee? My co-educator and I become the huffy puffy wolves by trying to blow down these structures with our "kiss blowers" (a kind of air slingshot). After building the cup structures, students face one final test – applying the best properties of materials to build forts out in Riverside Park.

"Build It" may seem like just another program, but it illustrates the reason why I love to work here. Yes, it can be gratifying to help second graders learn fancy big words such as flexible, transparent, opaque, absorbent, insulating and the like. However, that is not the main reason why we are here. We, as educators, feel successful and rewarded not only when students demonstrate mastery of skills in the final wrap-up, but also when they build what I call "It" – togetherness, team work and community.

Let me give you an example of the "It" I'm talking about. On a beautiful, crisp day in the late fall, Erick Anderson and I were teaching "Build It" at Riverside Park for the Business and Economics Academy of Milwaukee. The fallen logs, branches and foliage had not been covered with snow yet, so we had the perfect building materials for the class. The students

were building their forts very enthusiastically, when one of the chaperones made a comment that made our day. "It's amazing," she said, "I have never ever seen them working together before." She was referring to a couple of girls who were constantly arguing and fighting in class, but were carrying those big logs and branches together as a team. More than just a fort, they were building a sense of camaraderie and trust. Building "It" with kids in nature is why I love to work here.

Thank you for your support, because through your help you are also helping kids to keep on building "It." So, *"Get out your hard hat! It's time to put some materials to the test. Stretch'em, soak'em, crush'em..."* 🌱

The Dance of Whales — The Dance of Life

continued from page 1

Silent ripple of the big whale, breath and ... PBSSHH ... it happened again as the smaller one jumped! KABLAM ... then silence.

Wait ...

The daybreak danced crescendos as the larger whale now exploded and launched up and up and up in perfect synchronicity with the first sliver of the rising sun. Its body glistened as each of a thousand drops of spray glowed like priceless jewels and the moment was captured forever in my soul.

This really happened.

I have no idea what to make of an experience like this other than to simply say "thank you." I would not give up this moment of perfect connection to the natural world for anything ... and what is perhaps most profound ... I could not have been in this exact place in space and time were it not for the precise path that my life before me had taken. Everything up until this instant was suddenly validated. All the hard work of the Center. The raising of two children. The struggles with dementia for my Mom. It is especially meaningful this year, in which I have had to face my share of both inner and outer demons and challenges. Every joy and pain was brought into focus as necessary contributions to this flash of profound cathartic clarity. No silver bullet answers, just pure beauty, hope and mysterious purpose leading to an intense appreciation and love of all life.

As John Muir once said, "One touch of nature can make the whole world kin." I get it.

Almost equally profound is how, in this dance of life, I ended up on the Island of the Spirit in the first place. It is a story of how an experiment we affectionately call the Urban Ecology Center in Milwaukee has had an impact in a neighborhood some 3000 miles away.

I was invited to participate in a program in La Paz, Mexico called the *Way of Nature* through the Academy for Systemic Change, a program

I helped found. The *Way of Nature* offered a four day solo experience on an island an hour boat ride from La Paz. The program was to start and finish, however, at a community center called El Mangle (translated as the mangrove). El Mangle, I knew, was connected to a guy I once gave a tour through our Centers to about seven years ago. I reached out and here is a portion of his response:

Ken, I'm excited you are coming. I would be super interested in having you meet some of our team along, of course, with having you see what is happening on our campus. You will see the similarities with what you all have accomplished in Milwaukee. It has been inspired by your work to be sure.

It turns out that we were used as a significant guide post in the development of El Mangle. Stated another way, the incredible work that so many of us from Milwaukee have been involved in has found a seed in a poor barrio of a small city on the Pacific coast in Mexico ... who knew?

The site where El Mangle now sits is on the coast in an area that used to be a non-official trash dump with some abandoned buildings and a grain elevator. Plagued with drug issues, a few years ago one of the buildings known as the "crack house", was converted into a beautiful community center. The right leaders were engaged, inroads were made into the community and a massive community clean-up ensued. The grain elevator is used to teach rappelling and may be turned into a climbing wall. Art abounds as does the use of recycled materials. It's a meeting ground for researchers and fishermen to improve fishing practices in the Sea of Cortez. A place for locals to garden and grow food. A place for kids to learn about the environment. Sound familiar? While not used exactly the same way as our Centers in Milwaukee, the facility style, and positive, kind, intentional and proud community vibe is almost identical. I couldn't stop smiling while I was there.

I am so thankful for you and your role, whether

big or small, in making our high impact environmental community centers tick. I wonder what other places are out there like El Mangle that we don't know about? We may not have whales, but it doesn't take a whale to form the human-nature-life bridge that John Muir speaks of. It happens daily in Three Bridges Park, Washington Park and in the Milwaukee Rotary Centennial Arboretum. And now we know that it happens daily at El Mangle as well!

It all comes down to inspiration and clarity of purpose. It is powerful stuff. I encourage you to find your whale and more importantly, help the kids in our city do the same.

"This grand show is eternal. It is always sunrise somewhere; the dew is never dried all at once; a shower is forever falling; vapor is ever rising. Eternal sunrise, eternal dawn and gloaming, on sea and continents and islands, each in its turn, as the round earth rolls." John Muir. 🌿

Have your own "Dance of Life" moment ... *in Alaska!*

There's Still Time to Sign Up for the

Great Alaska Adventure

September 4-13, 2014!

Discover Alaska when fall colors are peaking and wildlife are preparing for the long winter ahead. Washington Park's Willie Karidis lived on the border of Denali Park for many years and looks forward to sharing this truly wild state with all of you.

Space is limited! Reserve your space with a \$50 nonrefundable deposit.

Visit urbanecologycenter.org/alaska or contact Willie if you have any questions, wkaridis@urbanecologycenter.org



NEWSLETTER

This newsletter is a publication of the **Urban Ecology Center**, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Thanks to the generous annual contributions of 255 foundations, corporations and organizations, 3300 members and many in-kind donors the Center provides safe parks and programs for over 300,000 visits 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
wkaridis@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 join.



7th Annual

Summer solstice soiree

*Join us for a summer night of celebration to
support the Urban Ecology Center's mission*

Saturday, June 21 | 6:30^{PM} AT Riverside Park

Tickets are \$150

See page 6 for details

FSC logo

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THE ARBORETUM'S FIRST SPRING

by Beth Heller

RIVERS OF FUN

by Laurel Cutright

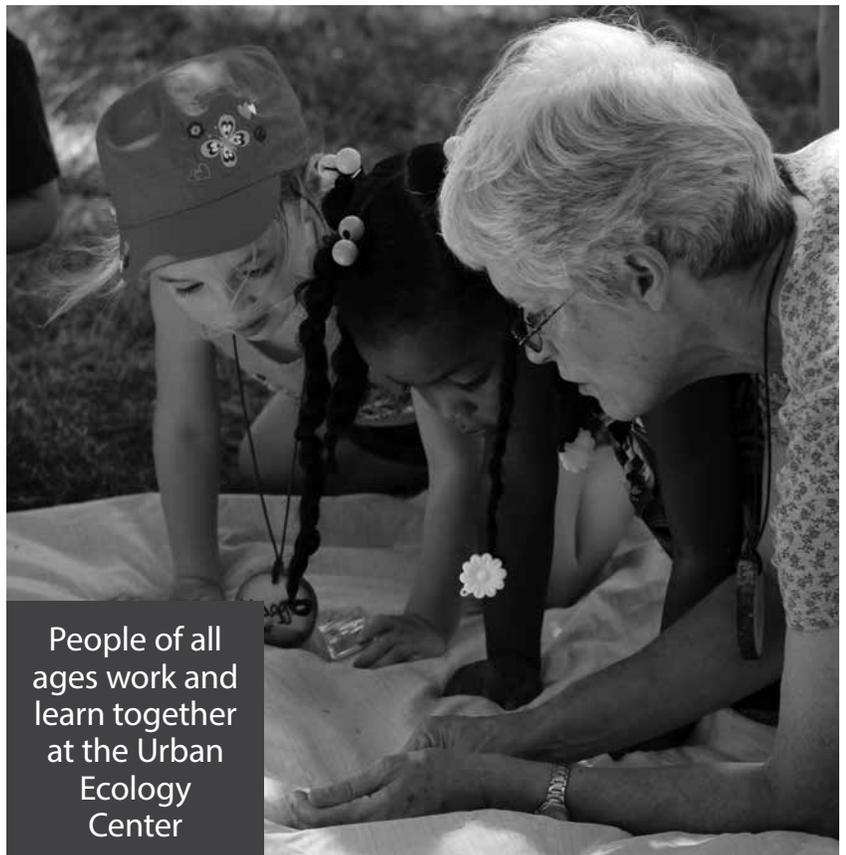
COMMUNITY GARDENS IN THE MENOMONEE VALLEY

by Glenna Holstein

BUILD IT!

by Miguel Santos

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



People of all
ages work and
learn together
at the Urban
Ecology
Center