Meet the EEC Summer Interns!

Every year the Elkhart Environmental Center hires two interns to assist with summer activities at the center. Interns lead field trip programs for schools and summer camps. They are crucially important for the education program as well as in maintaining the Food Education Garden, which is a popular field trip spot at the EEC. The interns also help plan and execute EnviroFest and the Volunteer Appreciation dinner, assist visitors, and complete a self-directed project while they are at the center that benefits them and the EEC. It’s going to be a busy summer at the EEC!

EEC Intern: Rocio Gutierrez

Hi! My name is Rocio Gutierrez. I am from Colombia, a graduate in Forest Engineering and specialized in Environmental Education and Management. I worked for a Public Institution in my country in the planning, implementing and monitoring of Environmental Projects for Schools and Citizen’s Environmental Education Projects where students and citizens embraced their environmental issues and learned to be sustainable in the long term. My interest is to be helpful, bringing my skills and knowledge to the Elkhart community.

Fun Fact: I love hugging trees and talking to them.

EEC Intern: Brandon Ihnen

Hello my name is Brandon. I am a lifelong resident of Northern Indiana, and currently live with my wife and children on the family farm. I graduated from Huntington University in Huntington Indiana in 2013. During my time at Huntington University I became an Indiana Master Naturalist, and began volunteering at Gene Stratton Porter Historical site, and Chain O’Lakes State Park. I also spent time volunteering at Merry Lea Environmental Learning Center. In 2014 I became a student at Goshen College/Merry Lea Environmental Learning Center, and studied topics such as Natural History of the Great Lakes, land management, and K-12 education. In May of 2015 I graduated from Goshen College with a Master of Arts degree in Environmental Education, and I am currently an intern here at The Elkhart Environmental Center. I love the outdoors and enjoy teaching both children and adults about the natural environment. I believe through environmental education all people of the community can come together to promote stewardship of the land in our local communities.
Volunteers are needed for EnviroFest! EnviroFest is Michiana’s environmental festival. The event is focused on sustainability and the environment. EnviroFest is the EEC’s largest annual event and we work together with 88.1 WVPE to put on this fantastic summer event. It would not be possible without the help of volunteers like you!

This year’s event will feature music from The Tumbleweed Jumpers, shows in the Kid’s Activity Area at 6:30 and 7:30pm with Charles C. Deam, Indiana’s first forester and early conservationist (re-enactor Matt Jones), local vendors and exhibitors showcasing products, services, projects and art related to sustainability and the environment. There will be a Local Beer & Wine Garden with locally brewed and produced beverages from Michiana brought to you by the South Bend Brew Werks.

Lots of volunteers are needed so please go to the online registration page at http://vols.pt/2uywvF and sign up for one or more shifts. After you enter an email address you will be taken to the sign up page. Once you’re signed up you can go back to view your scheduled shifts, change your shift time, add shifts and more. Volunteers receive snacks and refreshments during their shift. Volunteers also receive free admission to the event and an event shirt to wear during your shift. **All volunteers must attend orientation on June 27 @3pm or July 6 @6pm in order to work during the event.**

- **Volunteer Shifts**
  - 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM Event Set-up
  - 12:00 PM – 4:00 PM Event Set-up
  - 1:30 PM – 5:30 PM Vendor Load-In
  - 4:00 PM – 8:00 PM Event Staff
  - 7:00 PM – 11:00 PM Event Staff/Tear Down
  - 8:00 PM – 11:30 PM Vendor Load-out/Tear Down

- **Event Set-up**
  During this shift you help put up canopy tents, tables, and chairs around the event and set-up the event activities like the Kid’s Area, Music, Food, and Auction/Raffle Areas,

- **Vendor Load-In**
  Vendor Load-In and Load-Out tasks are essentially to assist the vendors and exhibitors in getting checked in and directing them to the correct location in the event space and helping direct them out after the event concludes.

- **Event Staff**
  Event Staff help with event activities. Volunteers may assist in the Kid’s Area, check ID’s and wristbands for the beer garden, distribute programs, or help at the information booth.

- **Event Tear-down**
  Volunteers during this shift will help clean up and put away activities, take down tents, tables and chairs and generally assist with cleanup after the event concludes.

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**Skills & Professional Development Opportunities**

**Wetlands Working for Your Community**
**Thursday, June 18, Harbor Shores Golf Course, St. Joseph, MI**
Learn about the status of wetlands, the benefits and functions wetlands provide, new wetland data for informing planning and zoning decisions, and zoning techniques for protecting wetlands and water quality. Learn how to keep your community’s rivers, streams, lakes, wetlands and drinking water clean and healthy! Register at http://www.swmpc.org/wetlandworkshop.asp or call (269) 925-1137 x 1521.

**Great Lakes Literacy – Environmental Education Association of Indiana (EEAI)**
**September 25-27, Dunes Learning Center, Chesterton Indiana**
Come learn techniques and best practices for teaching to develop Great Lakes Literate citizens. Presentations will focus on understanding ecology, fostering stewardship, and environmental justice issues all within the ecologically diverse and awe-inspiring landscapes of NW Indiana. It’s time to do the Dunes with EEAI!

http://eeai.org/2015Conference
Is your company, organization or club interested in volunteering as a group and giving back to the community? Call the EEC to set up a project at (574) 293-5070 or send an email to ericka.popovich@coei.org.

**Specialized Skills**
The EEC is seeking the following specialized skills. Please contact Ericka at (574) 293-5070 to find out how you can help!
- Communications/graphic design
- Landscaping/horticulture
- Event planning/management
- Edible/small space gardening

**Invasive Plant Removal & Habitat Enhancement**
*June - October*
Invasive plant species can quickly take over natural areas. Volunteers are needed to help manage and improve the habitats and natural areas at the EEC and remove plants like invasive honeysuckle, garlic mustard, Siberian elm and more.

**Gardens & Trails**

**Adopt-a-Trail**
*year-round*
Nature lovers are needed to help care for trails at Boot Lake Nature Preserve and the EEC. Volunteers keep trails clear of trash and debris. Plenty of trails still available!

**Adopt-a-Spot at the EEC**
*year-round*
Adopt educational and/or natural areas at the EEC! Remove weeds, invasive plants, litter and other maintenance tasks as needed to keep it looking good!

**Trail Improvement**
*year-round*
Help maintain the hiking trails at the EEC. Spread wood chips, trim overgrowth and ensure trails are in good condition. Equipment and training provided.

**Garden Projects**

**Food Garden Summer Harvest**
*June - August*
The garden is transitioning into summer vegetables, fruits and grains. Help us plant, weed, water, and harvest. Drop in farmers are welcome!

**Transform the Terrace**
*June - August*
The EEC front garden terrace needs some TLC. Help us pull out the invasive weeds and replace them with sunflowers and pumpkins!

**Education, Outreach, & Events**

**EnviroFest**
*July 10, 2015  5:30pm-9:00pm*
You can sign up to help during the event with our many activities or help out with event set-up or cleanup. Lots of time slots are available so you’re sure to find one that works with your schedule! Attending an orientation is required. Sign up online at [http://vols.pt/2uywvF](http://vols.pt/2uywvF) or contact Ericka at (574) 293-5070 or send an email to ericka.popovich@coei.org.

**Reflection Grove**
*year-round*
Help improve the Reflection Grove this summer by pulling weeds and trimming back overgrowth. We also need help keeping the observation platform looking good! Great for individuals and groups!

**Food Garden Summer Harvest**
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**Transform the Terrace**
*June - August*
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News from the EEC

What's growing?

Here's what is growing in the Food Education Garden:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amaranth</td>
<td>Multi-colored carrots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arugula</td>
<td>Peppers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basil</td>
<td>Tomatillos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collard Greens</td>
<td>Tomatoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curly cress</td>
<td>Zucchini</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kohlrabi</td>
<td>...And more!</td>
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Double-Layer Brownie-Bars from Chloe Lawrence

Overview: a basic peanut-butter cookie foundation topped with brownies with a layer of mini pretzels hidden in the middle.

**Peanut Butter Cookie base**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingredient</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>shortening</td>
<td>1 cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peanut butter (crunchy or creamy)</td>
<td>1 cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>white sugar</td>
<td>¾ cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>packed brown sugar</td>
<td>¾ cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eggs (reduced from 2 for a batch of conventional cookies)</td>
<td>1 ½ eggs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vanilla extract</td>
<td>1 tsp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>all-purpose flour</td>
<td>2 ¼ cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>baking soda</td>
<td>2 tsps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>salt</td>
<td>¼ tsp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peanut oil</td>
<td>(optional) 1 ½ or 2 tbls</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cream together shortening and peanut butter, then add sugar and cream until smooth. Add vanilla and eggs, stirring until fully blended. In separate bowl, sift together the flour, baking soda and salt. Add these dry ingredients to the wet in 2 or 3 phases, mixing well at each phase. If using the optional peanut oil, add it between flour phases. (Peanut oil emphasizes the flavor and makes the batter more manageable.)

**Brownie Layer (middle): Boxed Brownie Mix with adjustments**

**Liquid**: Increase the oil and decrease the water so that you still have the correct total amount of liquid. This makes the brownies more moist.

**Eggs**: Decrease the eggs to make the brownies denser and less cake-like. Most boxes call for 2 eggs. Instead, whisk together 3 whole eggs in a small bowl and divide in half; one half (1 ½ eggs) is for the brownies, the other half (1 ½ eggs) is for the cookie recipe.

**Cocoa**: add 2 Tbps. unsweetened cocoa.

**Put it all together**

Pour peanut butter cookie batter into a large, pre-greased/pre-floured baking dish (15”x10” or larger). Using a piece of wax paper or plastic wrap as a barrier, press out the batter across the bottom of the dish with your hands, making it fairly level. Remove the paper/plastic and place a layer of miniature pretzels closely together across the cookie batter. Gently and evenly, press the pretzels into the surface of the cookie batter so that the batter starts to fill the little “eye-holes” of the pretzels. We don't want these to be pockets of air in the final product. Pour the prepared brownie batter on top of pretzel layer. Use a spatula to help spread out the brownie, but don’t over-work it. Bake at 350’ for at least 45 minutes, then reduce the temperature to 325’ and check it at 10-minute increments.

Disclaimer: I haven't yet figured out the precise baking time. It seems to take 2X as long as the normal brownie baking instructions. Of course, brownies are best when they are still a little gooey!