ElkhartWood Community Tree Planting Program Grows in 2015

In the Winter 2015 newsletter we announced that Elkhart received the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) Gold Leaf Beautification Award for ElkhartWood. This award-winning program is a community supported, full-circle urban forestry outreach and education program that supports a community tree planting project on public land each fall through the sale of logs from city trees. This year the Elkhart Area Career Center was selected to receive trees and technical assistance through the ElkhartWood program. The trees will be planted with students from the Horticulture and Landscaping program and will replace ash trees lost due to the Emerald Ash Borer.

The ElkhartWood program also partnered with NIPSCO Forestry to support an additional tree planting project located on community-owned land. The Prairie Wolf Collective, LLC was selected for their project to plant fruit and nut trees for the benefit of the community. The trees for the Prairie Wolf Collective, LLC were provided by NIPSCO Forestry. NIPSCO Forestry seeks to plant trees and improve urban canopies in the communities they serve.

These community tree planting events are part of National NeighborWoods® Month. Both groups learn how to plant and care for trees as well as learn about the many benefits trees provide the community including energy savings, carbon storage, storm water interception and more! Each of the groups will have volunteers, but more hands make light the work! If you are interested in helping plant trees, please contact us at 574-293-5070.

Prairie Wolf Collective, LLC          October 18     1:00 - 4:00 PM
Elkhart Area Career Center          October 27 & 28  8:50 - 2:30 PM
Volunteer of the Year

Congratulations to Samantha Crooks, Daniel Coy, Eva Ruiz, and Peggy Scholfield!

The Volunteer of the Year is an award the EEC gives to recognize volunteers who go above and beyond to contribute to the EEC’s mission. We look at the number of hours, the breadth of different volunteer activities they have engaged in, and special initiative the individual has taken. This year the EEC is proud to recognize Samantha Crooks, Daniel Coy, Eva Ruiz, and Peggy Scholfield for the many hours and effort they put forth, especially for their work on the EnviroFest planning committee where they took on even more responsibility to make this year’s event bigger than ever before!

Volunteer Appreciation Dinner 2015!

On August 10, 2015 the cowboys and cowgirls showed up to the EEC and we had a great time! Over 40 volunteers came to the Texas Cookout-themed Volunteer Appreciation Dinner. Volunteers enjoyed applewood-smoked barbeque and fixings, while some tried their luck at the steer roping contest and a chili cook-off.

Five people entered the Chili Cook-Off (David Jansen, Brandon Ihnen, Dwight Fish, Denise Blanche, and Eva Ruiz). In Texas you have to go big or go home and our celebrity judge, Brandon Stanley, owner of New Paradigm Brewing Company, felt that Eva Ruiz brought the biggest flavor. See her award-winning recipe below.

The winner of the Steer Roping Contest was Ginger Thorne and the Best Dressed award went to cowgirl, Audrey Shaul. There were several door prizes given away this year too!

The Volunteer Appreciation Dinner is held annually to express our deepest thanks to our great group of volunteers. Even if you couldn’t make it out to this year’s dinner, you are the backbone of the Elkhart Environmental Center. Please know we appreciate everything you do!

Skills & Professional Development Opportunities

Greening the State House-Hoosier Environmental Council
November 19
Greening the Statehouse is Indiana’s largest annual gathering of environmental advocates, organized by the Hoosier Environmental Council. Visit their website for more information, http://www.hecweb.org/event/greening-the-statehouse/.

Project Learning Tree Online Workshop
If you are not able to attend trainings outside of the Elkhart area, then you may consider signing up for Project Learning Tree’s online workshop where you can work at your own pace and learn about their supplemental curriculum materials, extensive network, and student-led-service-learning programs. https://www.ezlcms.com/v5/login/1525/PLT_National.aspx
Is your group, organization or company interested in volunteering? Contact Ericka Popovich at the EEC for more information about upcoming projects.

### Featured Volunteer Activity - ElkhartWood Tree Planting

Volunteers are needed to help the Horticulture and Landscaping students at the Elkhart Area Career Center (EACC) plant trees on Oct. 27th & 28th. On Oct. 27th the students will learn all about trees and dig the holes. On Oct. 28th the students will participate in educational activities and finish by planting their trees. Please call (574) 293-5070 if you can help!

**EACC Tree Planting Schedule:**

- **Oct. 27** 8:50-10:50 AM & 12:30-2:30 PM
- **Oct. 28** 8:50-10:50 AM & 12:30-2:30 PM

### Fall Projects

**Reflection Grove**

*year-round*

The entrance to Reflection Grove is now beautifully lined with donated flowers, but we need volunteers to assist with weeding. Great for both individuals and groups looking to give back to the community this fall and have a lasting impact on outdoor education!

**Edible Education Garden**

*September - November*

Recently this garden was seeded for fall plants and we need help maintaining it before winter begins. We need help watering, weeding, thinning, and possibly planting winter cover crops. Drop in farmers are welcome!

**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*

Volunteers are needed to help care for trails at Boot Lake Nature Preserve and the EEC. There are 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.

### Specialized Skills

The EEC is seeking volunteers with the following specialized skills. If you have one or more of the following skill sets, please contact the EEC at (574) 293-5070 to find out how you can help!

- Landscaping/horticulture
- Event planning/management
- Edible/small space gardening

### Group & Corporate Opportunities

Is your group, organization or company interested in volunteering? Contact Ericka Popovich at the EEC for more information about upcoming projects.
**What’s growing?**

The fall months are upon us so we have variety of vegetables and herbs growing out at the EEC. Here’s what we have growing on right now:

- Onions
- Kohlrabi
- Swiss Chard
- Arugula
- Lettuce
- Broccoli
- Beets
- Chives
- Mustard Greens
- Kohlrabi
- Lettuce
- Chives
- Swiss Chard
- Broccoli
- Mustard Greens

We’ve also collected organic, heirloom seeds from our garden for the next planting including seeds from Amaranth, Arugula, Curly Cress, Broccoli, and Cilantro.

**EEC Staff Update**

The EEC is fortunate to have one of our interns, Rocio Gutierrez, extend her stay with us this year to assist with the ElkhartWood Community Tree Planting Program. Rocio has been working tirelessly to create activities that will educate the community about the value and benefits of trees, especially urban trees. Rocio is also enhancing and building the program through the development of evaluation tools, including surveys, so the program can continue to grow!

**A Recipe for Volunteers**

2015 Winning Chili Cook-Off Recipe by Eva Ruiz

**Chill-Osso**

**Ingredients**

- 4 lb. ground beef
- 1/4 tsp. cayenne pepper
- 4 oz. celery
- 1/4 tsp. ground black pepper
- 4 oz. onion diced
- 1/2 tsp. red crushed pepper (dry)
- 4 oz. sliced carrots
- 2 cups beef broth
- 1 cubed potato
- 4 cups tomato sauce
- 1/4 tsp. oregano
- 1 cup kidney beans
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 2 cups white beans (northern)

**Steps**

1. In a skillet, sauté the beef until no longer pink, add the carrots, celery and onions and mix together.
2. Add the oregano, peppers and beef base.
3. In a slow cooker add the sautéed ingredients and add the beef base, tomato sauce, kidney beans and white beans for 8 hours on a low setting.

**Serve with a lime slice, cilantro and avocado on top.**