EEC Master Plan Update

The Elkhart Environmental Center’s Master Plan has been a long time in coming, but we are proud to say it is almost done! Over the years the EEC has had many different programs, events, field trip experiences, volunteer programs, and even newsletters! In the 25 years of the EEC’s history, staff numbers have gone up and down with changes in the city. The center’s operations are spread thin for the staff of two and the property and facilities are in need of improvement. That was the starting point for the EEC’s first ever Master Plan. We received lots of input from the public, through emails, visits, and public meetings. To those of you who assisted us in this process – thank you! We had an overwhelming amount of support from the members of the Elkhart community and we couldn’t be more grateful. We have internal and external programming and operational improvements to make along with internal and external physical site improvements. It will be a lot of work, but the result will be worth it!

The physical report is currently in the final proofreading stages, but as soon as it is ready we plan to present it to the City’s Common Council and the Board of Public Works. Once approved, it will be posted on our website for you to view and download (www.elkhartindiana.org/eec). We will keep you updated on the progress of the plan and we hope you will support it as we move forward.

If you would like to know more about the plan and our projects, you are always welcome to visit us. We do have some images showing what the physical improvements, like a new entrance, could look like at the EEC. Of course, these are only a few of the many projects that are encompassed by the plan which also includes programming, partnerships, and operations related projects.

We anticipate volunteer opportunities will be available as part of the Master Plan, but we will also need your help being a champion for the EEC in our community. Your support is incredibly important in helping us successfully connect with the community resources that can bring this plan to life!
Arbor Day 2017

Arbor Day is the big spring event at the EEC and we need your help to make it a success! We need help setting up, giving away trees, supervising activities and cleaning up. We also need some experienced gardeners to help with the annual Spring Plant Exchange. Refreshments and lunch will be provided. Volunteers can also pick a free tree to take home and plant!

Times and descriptions for the volunteer shifts are below. You can sign up to help by going to our online volunteer registration at SignUp.com – http://signup.com/go/3AAMgE. Click here to go to online volunteer registration!

You do not need to create an account, but when you sign up you will be asked to provide an email address or you can connect with your Facebook account if you prefer. Basically we have to be able to contact you! You can sign up for as many spots as you want and you can register for more than one person if you are bringing friends or family with you! Contact the EEC if you need assistance.

Volunteer Schedule for Arbor Day
8:00-10:00 AM – Event Set-up
9:00 AM 1:00 PM – Event Volunteers (9:00 AM orientation)
11:00 AM – 2:00 PM - Plant Exchange Volunteers (11:00 AM orientation)
1:00 – 2:30 PM – Event Clean-up

Volunteer Activities for Arbor Day:
Event Set Up: This may include putting up tables, chairs, pop-up canopy tents, and banners as well as unloading trees for the giveaway.

Adopt-A-Tree & Event Info: Help attendees take home a free tree and add it to our Arbor Day tree map. Also provide general EEC information and event assistance as needed.

Spring Plant Exchange: Help set up and assist with the annual plant exchange.

Woodworking Demos and Showcase: welcome guests, answer questions and assist as needed.

Clean Up: Take down and put away tents, tables, chairs, and other event supplies.

You can also check out our website for more event information – www.elkhartindiana.org/ArborDay and follow the event on Facebook at www.Facebook.com/ElkhartEnvironmentalCenter.

Featured Spring Projects

Outdoor Work Day on March 18th
Saturday, March 18 12:30 – 2:30 PM
The Elkhart Environmental Center will once again host a large spring work day to remove invasive shrubs and get the center ready for spring. We will be joined by a group of prospective Goshen College students. We need help removing as many of these invasive shrubs as possible to open up view of the river and improve the habitat. If you are interested in helping remove invasive plants and/or can help us provide some guidance for the students, please let us know! With a little hard work and dedication we can make a big difference in just a couple hours!

Reflection Grove
The Reflection Grove is an outdoor education area that portrays the damage done by the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) to ash trees in our community. It's a great place for reflection, but right now it needs some work. This area includes a small trail, a low platform deck, and a display of ash trees. This spring we need to clean and stain the viewing deck, pull weeds, and spread woodchips. This project is perfect for a group and would make a huge difference at the center. It is also available to be adopted through the Adopt-a-Spot program (see pg. 3).
CURRENT VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

The EEC seeks volunteers for a variety of projects and tasks. Contact us at EECmail@coe.i.org or call 574-293-5070 to find out how you can help with one or more of the following opportunities.

Group Projects

Outdoor Work Day
Saturday, March 18  12:30 – 2:30 PM
Join the EEC to remove invasive shrubs along the river and wetland trails. We need volunteers to help remove the invasive plants and provide supervision to the student groups.

Reflection Grove
This outdoor education area needs some work to get it ready for visitors. This spring we need to clean and stain the viewing deck, pull weeds, and spread woodchips.

Learning Garden
This is a raised bed garden that needs to be prepped for spring. Activities include removing weeds, spreading compost & woodchips, and planting seeds and plants. It is also available through the Adopt-a-Spot program.

Invasive Shrub Removal
Invasive honeysuckle shrubs are growing along the river and wetlands at the EEC and they need to be removed. This is good for groups! There are several areas needing work so this is perfect for even large groups.

Community Events

Arbor Day
Saturday, April 29
More information about this year's event is on page 2. Sign up online at http://signup.com/go/3AAMgE or contact the EEC for more information.

EnviroFest Planning Committee
December – August
If you enjoy event planning and are interested in promoting environmental stewardship, join the EnviroFest Planning Committee. We are looking for motivated individuals to help with fundraising, activity planning, display recruitment, and more.

Nature lovers

Adopt-a-Trail
Help care for trails at Boot Lake Nature Preserve and the EEC. Volunteers keep trails clear of trash and debris.

Adopt-a-Spot
Similar to the adopt-a-trail, except it is designed for groups. Spots are currently available at the EEC site including the Reflection Grove and Learning Garden. This entails keeping the area clean, weeding and special tasks for your spot like planting seeds.
We know EEC volunteers know a lot about the center and we thought it might be fun to put that knowledge to the test! If you think you know the answer to the question below (without googling it!), let us know by sending an email to EECmail@coei.org with the subject “EEC Trivia” and make sure you include your name and phone number! If you have the right answer you just might win a 2015 EnviroFest T-shirt We will select up to three winners randomly from among the correct responses and we’ll post the answers in the summer issue of the volunteer newsletter!

**Spring Trivia Question:** Which city department is the EEC a part of?

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**Volunteer Trivia**

We know EEC volunteers know a lot about the center and we thought it might be fun to put that knowledge to the test! If you think you know the answer to the question below (without googling it!), let us know by sending an email to EECmail@coei.org with the subject “EEC Trivia” and make sure you include your name and phone number! If you have the right answer you just might win a 2015 EnviroFest T-shirt We will select up to three winners randomly from among the correct responses and we’ll post the answers in the summer issue of the volunteer newsletter!

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**EnviroFest Photo Share!**

Do you love your EnviroFest T-shirt We know our volunteers proudly wear their EnviroFest shirts long after the event is over. We’d love to share some fun photos in the summer issue of the volunteer newsletter. If you want to share your favorite photo, send it to EECmail@coei.org with the subject “EnviroFest Photo”. You just might see your photo in our summer newsletter!

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**Find Us**

You can learn more about the Elkhart Environmental Center and the programs and volunteer opportunities on our website: www.elkhartindiana.org/eec, inquiring by email: eecmail@coei.org, or by calling: 574-293-5070. You can also follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/ElkhartEnvironmentalCenter.

For other formats contact the Elkhart Environmental Center
Voice: (574) 293-5070 Email: eecmail@coei.org