Elkhart Environmental Center

Volunteer Newsletter

Spring 2019   Issue 19

UPCOMING EVENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Event Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>EnviroFest Planning Committee</td>
<td>Monday, March 4th</td>
<td>6:00 PM - 7:00 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meditation Yoga</td>
<td>Monday, March 11th</td>
<td>5:30 PM - 6:00 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nature Play Day “Birds!” theme</td>
<td>Thursday, March 14th</td>
<td>10:00 AM - 11:30 AM</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Prairie Burn Workshop</td>
<td>Saturday, March 16th</td>
<td>9:00 AM - 3:00 PM</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Community Garden Open House</td>
<td>Saturday, March 23rd</td>
<td>9:00 AM - 11:00 AM</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Goshen College Volunteer Day</td>
<td>Saturday, March 23rd</td>
<td>12:30 PM - 2:30 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>EnviroFest Planning Committee</td>
<td>Monday, April 1st</td>
<td>6:00 PM - 7:00 PM</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Backyard Habitat Workshop</td>
<td>Saturday, April 6th</td>
<td>10:00 AM - 12:00 PM</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Meditation Yoga</td>
<td>Monday, April 8th</td>
<td>5:30 PM - 6:30 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nature Play Day “Eggs and Nests” theme</td>
<td>Monday, April 11th</td>
<td>10:00 AM - 11:30 AM</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Tree Transplanting Day</td>
<td>Saturday, April 13th</td>
<td>11:30 AM - 1:00 PM</td>
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<td></td>
<td>EEC Close for City Holiday</td>
<td>Friday, April 19th - Good Friday</td>
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<td>Earth Day &amp; Spring Seed Exchange</td>
<td>Saturday, April 27th</td>
<td>10:00 AM - 1:00 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>EnviroFest Planning Committee</td>
<td>Monday, May 6th</td>
<td>6:00 PM - 7:00 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nature Play Day “Spring Flowers” theme</td>
<td>Monday, May 9th</td>
<td>10:00 AM - 11:30 AM</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meditation Yoga</td>
<td>Monday, May 13th</td>
<td>5:30 PM - 6:30 PM</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Bike to Work Day</td>
<td>Friday, May 17th</td>
<td>7:00 AM - 10:00 AM</td>
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<td></td>
<td>EEC Closed for City Holiday</td>
<td>Tuesday, May 7th - Election Day, Monday, May 28th - Memorial Day</td>
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FEATURED UPDATES

Earth Day - Saturday, April 27
This year is our first Earth Day event (instead of Arbor Day, see page 2) at the EEC and we need your help to make it a success! Our volunteer needs include:
- Setup & cleanup
- Giving away trees
- Guiding hikes
- Photography
- Training, refreshments, and lunch will be provided. Volunteers can also pick up a free tree to take home and plant! Find details on page 2.

EnviroFest Planning Committee
EnviroFest is our biggest event of the year—and we couldn’t do it without you! There will be a lot of changes this year! If you are interested in helping us plan the event join the EnviroFest Committee! The committee is open to everyone and meets the first Monday of each month. Find more information on page 5.

Tree Transplanting Day - Saturday, April 13
Grab some FREE PIZZA and help us transplant tree saplings for our Earth Day tree giveaway! See page 5 for more details.

New Entryway Sign
This winter, a brand new entryway sign was installed as part of the EEC’s Master Plan! See page 6 for more details about our newest addition.

CONTACT INFO

(574) 293-5070
www.elkhartindiana.org/eec
www.facebook.com/ElkhartEnvironmentalCenter
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Environmental Programs Coordinator
Annie.Klehfoth@coei.org
Jamison Czarnecki
EEC Supervisor
Jamison.Czarnecki@coei.org
EARTH DAY CELEBRATION

This year, we will be switching from our previous annual event, Arbor Day, to our new Earth Day celebrations! Many popular traditions of Arbor Day will become a part of Earth Day (for example, you can still get a free tree at our Adopt-A-Tree booth, and we will still have a plant exchange). Our goal is to expand the scope of the event to include many environmental aspects, not just trees.

Help us make our first Earth Day a success on **Saturday, April 27th**! All volunteer positions will receive training, refreshments, and lunch. Volunteers can also pick up a free tree to take home and plant! Times and descriptions for the volunteer shifts are below.

Please also check out information about our Tree Transplanting Day on page 5.

**How do I sign up?**

You can sign up to volunteer by going to our online volunteer registration at SignUp.com – [http://signup.com/go/KnxnZTN](http://signup.com/go/KnxnZTN). You don’t need to create an account, but you will be asked to provide an email address (or connect through Facebook). We just need 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.

**More Information**

You can also check out our website for more event information and updates at [www.elkhartindiana.org/EarthDay](http://www.elkhartindiana.org/EarthDay) and follow the event on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/ElkhartEnvironmentalCenter](http://www.facebook.com/ElkhartEnvironmentalCenter)

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**Volunteer Schedule for Earth Day**

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00 AM - 10:00 AM</td>
<td>Event Setup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00 AM - 1:00 PM</td>
<td>Event Volunteers (9:00 AM orientation)</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:00 AM - 2:00 PM</td>
<td>Spring Seeds &amp; Starters Exchange (11:00 AM orientation)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:00 PM - 2:30 PM</td>
<td>Event Cleanup</td>
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**Volunteer Activities for Earth Day**

**Event Set Up**
Help us get everything ready for the event! 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 by handing out or taking tickets for the different available species. Add trees to our Earth Day tree map (training and assistance will be provided). Answer questions about tree species (information will be provided).

**Spring Seeds & Starters Exchange**
Assist our emcee with set up and the exchange activities.

**Event Photography**
Help us document the event! Take pictures of the event activities, visitors, and volunteers. We may use your photos in our promotional materials!

**Hike Guide**
Lead fun and informative trail hikes for visitors throughout the event. Hikes should be about 20 minutes long and include topical information (plant ID, plant benefits/services, wildlife info, etc.).

**EEC Booth**
Help our visitors learn more about the EEC! Provide information on our site and programs (informational flyers and posters will be available, and training is provided).

**ElkhartWood Showcase**
Welcome guests and answer questions about the EEC and our ElkhartWood Program (information will be available, training is provided).

**Habitat Restoration Volunteer Leader**
Lead groups of visitors and volunteers as we remove invasive species and plant native species to restore our onsite habitats (training is provided).

**Event Clean Up**
Help us put it all away! Take down and put away tents, tables, chairs, and other event supplies.
Dr. Carla Gull, from Inside Outside Michiana, has been hosting free Nature Play Days at the EEC, which are open to the public. Each Nature Play Day in the current series (January - May) has a different theme each month and includes a story time and guided hike. Visitors are also always welcome to stay after the program and enjoy our kids’ Learning Loft upstairs, which is full of books, games, toys, a puppet show area, and our live eastern box turtle, Lucy.

**NEW WORKSHOPS**

**Prairie Burn Workshop**

On Saturday, March 16 from 9 AM - 3 PM, the EEC is partnering with IN DNR, Pheasants Forever/Quail Forever, USDA-NRCS, and Elkhart County SWCD to burn one of our prairies. Prairies naturally rely on fire to remain healthy, revitalize the soil, and keep out invasive plant species. However, most natural fire-prone areas are suppressed due to nearby human development. Scheduling prairie burns with professionals is a management technique used to mimic natural processes and restore the health of the ecosystem. But don’t just take our word for it--come check out our Prairie Burn Workshop and learn all about the hows and whys of professional burning before our scheduled burn!

**Backyard Habitat Workshop**

On Saturday, April 6 from 10 AM - 12 PM, Indiana Wildlife Federation will be leading a Certified Backyard Habitat Workshop at the EEC. Anyone interested in protecting the natural beauty and local wildlife of Indiana is welcome to come learn about native plants and animals, explore the links between their communities and larger ecosystems, and discover how to create a wildlife-friendly habitat in your own backyard!

**COMMUNITY GARDEN OPEN HOUSE**

Enjoy gardening? Looking for a place to grow your own vegetables? Join our Adopt-A-Plot program! Adopt up to 5 plots in our Learning Garden and get free seeds, compost, mulch, and access to tools. Join us on Saturday, March 3 from 9 AM - 11 AM as we prep the garden and adopt out the plots.

Adopters commit to tending their plot(s) at least twice a week during the growing season.

**BIKE TO WORK WEEK & DAY**

Last year, the EEC partnered with several local organizations for our first ever Bike to Work Day celebration and After-Work Bike Rides and we are looking forward to expanding the event in 2019!

National Bike to Work Week is May 13 - May 17, and organizations in Elkhart will be hosting several events all week long. Details about these events and their associated organizations will be updated on our Facebook and city website.

To top off the week, the EEC will once again host a breakfast event downtown. On Friday, May 17 from 7 AM - 10 AM at the Elkhart Civic Plaza Downtown, come get free breakfast, learn about cycling in the city, enter for a chance to win a raffle prize, and more! Check in on our Facebook and website for more details as they are updated!
This February, the EEC hosted a Winter Bird Feeder Watching day in our Visitor’s Cabin from 9 AM - 3 PM. We supplied binoculars and fully stocked bird feeders for visitors interested in stopping by to enjoy the view of wildlife from our windows. Visitors could also pick up a Winter Bird BINGO sheet full of birds that had been spotted on our site during the annual bird count. BINGO winners had the option of taking home a bird feeder or an edible birdseed ornament to hang outside.

While this event is over, visitors are always welcome to stop by and enjoy the view of our bird feeders, walk our trails, or hang out in our kids’ Learning Loft upstairs.

In December, the EEC partnered with Indiana Michigan Power to provide homeowners with information about how to reduce their environmental impact and their electric bill. We are always looking for ways to be a resource to the community. If you have ideas or requests for programming, contact us and let us know!

MINI MOVIE DAY

The EEC partnered with the Elkhart Public Library in January to host a movie day with free kettle corn! The library brought a copy of The Lorax and fun nature-themed kids’ books along with their adorable Dr. Suess character cutouts to decorate the Visitor’s Cabin. We even got a chance to spot some fun wildlife from the windows, including a variety of native birds and several deer! Families brought pillows and blankets to enjoy the movie and then explored our kids’ Learning Loft upstairs. The kids’ Learning Loft has puppets, games, books, and our live eastern box turtle, Lucy! This space is open to the public during our regular business hours (Monday - Friday 8 AM - 5 PM excluding city holidays) and most Saturdays throughout the summer. Come check it out!

HOLIDAY HOORAH!

On Saturday, December 15, the EEC hosted our first Holiday Hoorah! from 11 AM - 2 PM, which included all kinds of holiday fun and goodies, including cookies and peppermint hot chocolate! During the event, visitors learned how to make up-cycled holiday decorations and ornaments from regular household items that might otherwise be thrown away, including mismatched puzzle pieces and burnt-out light bulbs. Inside Outside Michiana also stopped by the event for a winter-themed story time and a scavenger hunt hike!
CURRENT VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Events

Tree Transplanting Day - Grab some FREE PIZZA and come help us transplant trees into new pots with fresh soil and compost. These trees will be given away at Earth Day--help us get them off to a good start! We have 200 trees to transplant, so we could use all the help we can get!

Earth Day - Help us make our Earth Day event a success! Find more details about Earth Day opportunities on page 2.

EnviroFest - Interested in helping with fundraising, activity planning, and more? Join the planning committee! We’re looking for volunteers with creative ideas who are interested in taking a leadership role with a subcommittee. Meetings occur the first Monday of every month. If you miss a meeting or haven’t attended one yet, don’t worry! We are more than happy to provide notes from past meetings, just email us and ask.

Not interested in planning the event, but still want to help the day of? We still need you! Details will be updated on our website and in our summer newsletter.

If you have any questions or would like more information, please call (574) 293-5070 or email Annie.Klehfoth@coei.org.

Featured Spring Opportunities

Interested in volunteering? We’d love to work with you! Contact Annie Klehfoth for more information. Email Annie.Klehfoth@coei.org or call (574) 293-5070. You can also sign up to volunteer online at http://signup.com/go/CbUzCsH.

Adopt-A-Plot

The EEC is once again adopting out plots in our Learning Garden. Adopt up to 5 plots, stop by to take care of them at least twice a week, and grow your own fruits, vegetables, and flowers to take home! Seeds, compost, mulch, and tools will be provided, along with any necessary training. Find more information on our website or email EECmail@coei.org.

Goshen College Volunteer Day

Goshen College students will once again be coming out to help us prepare the site for spring! Help us mulch the trails, remove invasive species, and get our “spring cleaning” of the site done for visitors and wildlife on March 23 from 12:30 PM - 2:30 PM.

Community Garden Open House

Help us get the garden ready for our plot adopters! We’ll be weeding and mulching and have seeds and compost available for those interested in adopting!

Summer Camp Volunteer

We’re always working to grow our educational programming and this year we will be reinstating our EnviroKid Summer Camp! We could use help from volunteers to assist our staff with leading and supervising activities during the week-long camp. Further details will be posted on our website--check back to learn more!

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Sustainability in Practice: A Panel Discussion

March 20 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM at Indiana University South Bend Wiekamp Hall 1001

Gain a better understanding of what energy efficiency is all about and how you can be incentivized for improving energy efficiency at home, school, or work. The panel will offer a “behind the scenes” view into how the University of Notre Dame, the City of South Bend, and area businesses are meeting their sustainability goals. Details can be found at https://www.iusb.edu/csfuture/blog/?page_id=1923.

Indiana Master Naturalist Course

March 14 – November 14 (second Thursday of the month) in Kosciusko County, Warsaw

Become a certified Indiana Master Naturalist by attending classes focused on Indiana’s natural resources. Topics include geology/soils, water, botany, zoology, people and natural resources, among others. Classes take place on the second Thursday of the month, from 5:30 – 8:30 p.m. For more information, contact Darci Zolman at darc.zolman@in.nacdnet.net or (574) 267-7445 ext. 3.

Investigating Water Quality: A Workshop for Educators in the Great Lakes Region

March 16 9 AM - 3 PM at Paul H. Douglas Center for Environmental Education at Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore

Educators, pre-service teachers, naturalists, interpreters, youth leaders, and anyone working with middle- and high school aged youth are invited to enjoy a day-long workshop investigating educational activities dealing with water quality! There is a $10 workshop fee, pre-registration is required, and registration is limited. To register, visit https://duneslearningcenter.org/events/2019/3/16/investigating-water-quality-a-workshop-for-educators-in-the-great-lakes-region or call (219)395-9555 by March 8.
PHOTO FUN

The Elkhart Environmental Center is an environmental education facility that opened in 1991 on a remediated city dump. We have over 33 acres of dedicated trails, prairies, wetlands, and river access. Trails are open to the public dawn through dusk; please feel free to park at the silver gate (if it is closed) and walk in to enjoy the trails. The Center offers educational programs, events, and volunteer opportunities for the public. Information about the Center’s programs and events can be found online at www.elkhartindiana.org/eec or on our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/elkhartenvironmentalcenter. You can contact the Center by email at eecmail@coei.org, or by calling: 574-293-5070. Feel free to also stop by and say hi! We are located at 1717 E Lusher Ave in Elkhart.

NEW ENTRANCE SIGN

The EEC has a new entryway sign! The sign was installed the second week of February by Signcrafters, Inc. with portions donated by Kuert Concrete. Our next steps will be to remove other signage, add stonework, flowers, and overhead lighting.

Installing an entryway sign was established as a goal in our Master Plan, and we are very excited to have moved forward on this particular to-do item! The entryway sign clearly marks the beginning of our long drive in and will help visitors know that they have arrived in the right place. We have already had several first-time visitors stop by to check out the Center since the sign was installed. We are looking forward to improving the sign and the site more as we continue to work towards our goals laid out in the Master Plan.

GREEN DRINKS

Join this environmentally-minded networking group for drinks and snacks at local pubs around Elkhart. Elkhart’s Green Drinks meets every third Wednesday from 5:30 PM - 7:00 PM to discuss “green” topics and meet new people.

Updates and details can be found by visiting www.greendrinks.org/Elkhart or on Facebook.

Scheduled speakers and locations below:

March 20 - Logan Miller from Borden on “Recycling in Elkhart” at Heinnies
April 17 - Dr. Carla Gull from Inside Outside Michiana on "How to Engage Kids in the Outdoors!" at Flippin Cow
May 15 - Jacob Wolgamood from Bike Elkhart on "Biking in Elkhart" at Hydraulic Brewery

ABOUT THE EEC

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