

## December

### EnviroFest Committee Meeting

Monday, Dec. 7<sup>th</sup> 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Virtual - email [EECmail@coei.org](mailto:EECmail@coei.org) for details

### Climate Action Conversation

Thursday, Dec. 10<sup>th</sup> 6:30 PM - 8:00 PM

Virtual - email [EECmail@coei.org](mailto:EECmail@coei.org) for details

### Holiday Hoorah!

Tuesday, Dec. 15<sup>th</sup> kit pickup

Wednesday, Dec. 16<sup>th</sup> walkthrough video

### Styrofoam & Electronic Recycling Day

Thursday, Dec. 17<sup>th</sup> 8:00 AM - 3:00 PM

at Recycling Works

### EEC Closed for City Holiday

Friday, Dec. 25<sup>th</sup> Christmas Day

## January

### EEC Closed for City Holiday

Friday, Jan. 1<sup>st</sup> New Year's Day

### EnviroFest Committee Meeting

Monday, Jan. 7<sup>th</sup> 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Virtual - email [EECmail@coei.org](mailto:EECmail@coei.org) for details

### Climate Action Conversation

Thursday, Jan. 14<sup>th</sup> 6:30 PM - 8:00 PM

Virtual - email [EECmail@coei.org](mailto:EECmail@coei.org) for details

### EEC Closed for City Holiday

Monday, Jan. 15<sup>th</sup> Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

## February

### EnviroFest Committee Meeting

Monday, Nov. 3<sup>rd</sup> 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Virtual - email [EECmail@coei.org](mailto:EECmail@coei.org) for details

### Climate Action Conversation

Thursday, Feb. 11<sup>th</sup> 6:30 PM - 8:00 PM

Virtual - email [EECmail@coei.org](mailto:EECmail@coei.org) for details

### EEC Closed for City Holiday

Monday, Feb. 15<sup>th</sup> Presidents' Day

Trails Open Everyday

Dawn - Dusk

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## FEATURED UPDATE

### Climate Action Plan

The EEC has been a part of the Indiana Sustainability Development Program (ISDP) and been working with the IU Environmental Resilience Institute to create a Climate Action Plan (CAP) for the City of Elkhart. Thanks in large part to our hardworking Climate Action Fellow, Cara Sullivan, we have completed a draft of the CAP and are now working to refine the draft to reflect and meet the needs, concerns, and ability of the community to create a CAP by and for Elkhart.

Unfortunately, the program is coming to a close and our time with our Climate Fellow, Cara, has come to an end. We are extremely grateful for the time that we were able to work with Cara, as she contributed immensely to our progress towards a Climate Action Plan. If you would like to sign a virtual Thank You card for Cara, please go to <https://www.groupgreeting.com/sign/1a3dccefbe701ff> by December 4th.

For more information on our Climate Action Conversations, see **page 3.**

# WHAT'S NEW

## STONE PLANTER BASE

This summer and fall, we worked with a local Eagle Scout, Jay Keen, and Kuert Concrete to create a stone planter base around our new entrance sign. This project is an extension of our efforts to make the EEC entrance friendly and inviting--and we have come a long way!

We are extremely grateful to Kuert Concrete and Mark Walker, who donated the stones, glue, and gravel for this project, as well as providing valuable expertise and guidance to Jay. We are also grateful to Eagle Scout, Jay Keen, who donated time and hard work to bring this project to life. Come check out their hard work!



## EASTERN PRAIRIE

We've been working with the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (INDNR) to restore the eastern prairie for a few years now. The eastern prairie is one of our more popular trails, but unfortunately the prairie itself has become overrun with several invasive plants. Over the past couple years, we've tried (unsuccessfully) to manage the area with controlled burns. This fall, upon recommendation from the INDNR, we mowed the prairie and applied an herbicide. Another herbicide application will be done in the spring, before we seed the area with all-native prairie seeds.

Moving forward, we hope to be able to manage the prairie with controlled burns, as this is a more natural management technique.

## VOLUNTEERING

Our volunteer program and opportunities have been put on a temporary hold. Due to staff changes and limitations, the weather, and COVID conditions, we are not currently hosting onsite volunteer activities/events. Independent and virtual opportunities are being handled on a case-by-case basis. If you have any questions, please call or email.

Adopt-A-Trail programs continue at the discretion of each volunteer.

Thank you for all your support!

## INTERPRETIVE TRAIL SIGNS

With help from our Public Works maintenance crew, we were able to install 6 new interpretive trail signs in 3 different areas of the EEC: our wetland, prairie, and vernal pools ecosystems! Each area now features 2 signs that provide information about their adjacent habitat. One sign is targeted towards adults, the other is shorter and more kid-friendly. The wetland and vernal pools signs were made possible through reduced operational costs this year. The prairie signs were funded, in part, through our partnership with the Indiana Department of Natural Resources and through generous donations that we have received for environmental education throughout the years.

We hope to add a virtual component to the signs in the near future: an environmental education website! Stay tuned for updates.





# UPCOMING PROGRAMS

## HOLIDAY HOORAH!

The EEC will once again be partnering with the Elkhart Public Library for our annual Holiday Hoorah! This year, activities will be bundled into a Program in a Bag and instructions will be provided virtually.

Each bag will include the materials that you need to make our holiday recycled crafts, along with some written instructions. We will also post a video to walk you through the steps and show some examples.

Registration for kits will be open from December 7 - 14. Pickup will take place on December 15. Our video walkthrough will launch on December 16 from both our and the Elkhart Public Library's Facebook pages.

We are excited to be able to continue offering one of our favorite programs, even if it must be from a distance this year. If you have questions about the program or any of the crafts, please feel free to reach out via email or on our Facebook page.

If you would like to donate burnt-out light bulbs for this craft or if you would like to receive updates for this program, please email [EECmail@coei.org](mailto:EECmail@coei.org).

## CLIMATE ACTION CONVERSATIONS

The EEC has been hosting regular online Climate Action Conversations each month. These Conversations are a mixture of presentation, Q&A, and dialogue between EEC staff and our community members where everyone can learn more about the Climate Action Planning process, as well as make their voices heard.

Recent Climate Action Conversations have taken a more educational turn. As participants have observed in past Conversations, the Climate Action Plan consists of some terms and concepts that people in the community may be unfamiliar with. Each Climate Action Conversation aims to focus on one of these terms or concepts, to define it, discuss its context in our Climate Action Plan, and answer questions from the audience.

We encourage everyone to check out upcoming Climate Action Conversations and to join our Weekly Updates email list (email [elkhartenvironmentalcenter@gmail.com](mailto:elkhartenvironmentalcenter@gmail.com)), to stay up-to-date on all Climate Action Plan developments and to be a part of the process. Our biggest goal is for the Elkhart Climate Action Plan to be reflective of our community's interests, needs, and concerns. We are very interested to hear from you--please feel free to send us an [email](#) or reach out with a phone call!

Please check out [www.elkhartindiana.org/climateactionplan](http://www.elkhartindiana.org/climateactionplan) for details and updates.

## WINTER BIRDING

Tune in to our Facebook page on Saturday, December 12 at 9 AM for a video walkthrough of how to make eco-friendly DIY bird feeders. Stay tuned to the Facebook page for tips and tricks for helping birds through the harsh winter months. We'll also be posting other online resources for learning about birds and developing your birding skills.

If you have your own favorite tips or facts about winter birding, please feel free to share!



# PAST EVENTS & PROGRAMS

## ELKHART RIVER CLEANUPS

Thank you to everyone who was able to participate in either/both of our Elkhart River Cleanup events this year! Instead of our typical route from the EEC to Elkhart Central High School, we focused on the area along Waterfall Drive and American Park. Due to the recent dam removal, river levels in these areas were low and revealed several large items (such as shopping carts and barrels) that have been embedded into the riverbed. Volunteers dove right into digging items out of the river and made a HUGE impact!

Our first cleanup focused on both areas. A total of 22 people gave over 76 hours to remove at least 25 shopping carts, 15 tires, 10 barrels, a water heater, broken glass, bottles, cans, bikes, etc. Luckily, Borden Waste-Away donated a Dumpster for the event!

Our second cleanup focused on American Park, and wrapped up our previous efforts. A total of 17 people gave over 50 hours to remove at least 2 picnic tables, 6 tires, 10 barrels, a safe, a boat, broken glass, bottles, cans, etc.

We look forward to hosting more river cleanups in the future. If you are interested in receiving updates, email [EECmail@coei.org](mailto:EECmail@coei.org).

## SITE PROJECTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

As COVID and staff restrictions continue, most of our regular programs and events have been displaced. This fall and winter we have instead been focusing on the following projects and accomplishments:

- \* Conducting multiple river cleanup events
  - \* Creating new programs/events and partnerships
  - \* Finalizing fall projects:
    - \* Stone Planter Base
    - \* Interpretive Trail Signs
  - \* Organizing our volunteer shed; sterilizing, sharpening, and cleaning tools and equipment
  - \* Creating a Climate Action Plan for the city; engaging community members, local businesses, industries, organizations and other stakeholders
  - \* Creating ADA access to our new pavilion (construction postponed until Spring)
  - \* Restoring our eastern prairie ecosystem
  - \* Creating virtual/distance programming
- And more! Thank you to everyone who has continued to support the EEC and help with our projects!

We continue to look for new ways to serve our community amid adverse conditions. If you have ideas or requests for programs or projects that you would like to see at the EEC, please let us know!

## FALL PROGRAMS

### FALL NATURE SCAVENGER HUNT

We kicked off the season with a fun scavenger hunt--checking the trails for signs of autumn and our favorite pieces of nature!

### PUMPKIN CARVING

This event was a blast! We had fun seeing all the creative ways that families carved their Halloween pumpkins. Photos from this event are up on our [Facebook](#)--check them out!

### GREEN YOUR HALLOWEEN

We're always looking for ways to be more sustainable, especially when it comes to celebrating the holidays. This event featured several stations with tips and tricks for enjoying a 'green' Halloween. If you missed it, check out some of our photos from the event on [Facebook](#).

### HAUNTED WALK THROUGH THE WOODS

This event was a big hit! We had almost 200 visitors come out to explore our Halloween-decorated trails with flashlights, and return to enjoy hot cocoa, warm apple cider, cookies, and candy. Our intern program coordinator, Emma, created a variety of recycled and natural decorations and, with other reusable decorations, spook-ified our trails for a Halloween night hike! Photos of the decorations can be found on [page 6](#), as well as on our [Facebook](#).

# OPPORTUNITIES

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Interested in volunteering? We'd love to work with you!

Email [Annie.Klehfoth@coei.org](mailto:Annie.Klehfoth@coei.org) or call (574) 293-5070.

You can also sign up to volunteer online at <http://signup.com/go/CbUzCsH>.

### EnviroFest Committee

**First Monday of the month**      **6 PM - 7 PM via WebEx (online)**

Plans for our 2021 EnviroFest event are starting already--help us celebrate the 25th annual environmental festival! We'd love to hear your ideas! Email [EECmail@coei.org](mailto:EECmail@coei.org) to be included on our email list and meeting invite links.

### Adopt-A-Trail

**Starting Monday, January 4**

Enjoy spending time on our trails? Adopt one! Adopt-A-Trail volunteers help keep our trails in good shape for visitors and wildlife for the year. Trails are available for adoption by groups AND individuals! Check out more details on our website at [elkhartindiana.org/eecvolunteer](http://elkhartindiana.org/eecvolunteer)

### Climate Action Plan

**Variable**

Interested in supporting our Climate Action Plan efforts for the city? Help facilitate community outreach/education, provide input/feedback, be a part of the planning and implementation process! Email [EECmail@coei.org](mailto:EECmail@coei.org) for more information and potential volunteer opportunities.

### Invasive Species Removal

**By appointment**

Learn about plant ID and land management through training with EEC staff to identify and remove invasive plants from the EEC! Invasive plants are a constant threat to our local wildlife and an ongoing project for us. If you're interested in helping out, [email EECmail@coei.org](mailto:EECmail@coei.org) for details on dates/times. Groups welcome.

## EDUCATION/PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### Virtual Lunch N Learn Series: Beekeeping

*December 1, 8 at 12 PM*

*Online*

Join Purdue Extension for a Lunch and Learn Series for Beekeepers and Bee Enthusiasts. Dates and topics are: Dec. 1: Urban Beekeeping (Tim and Nicole, Detroit Hives; hosted by Alex Pettigrew); Dec. 8: Tools and Techniques (Bastins Honey Been Farm; hosted by Lais McCartney). For more information or to register, go to <https://extension.entm.purdue.edu/beehive/purdues-winter-cluster/>.

### Webinar: How to Get a Federal (Interpretation/Ranger) Job

*December 8 at 1 PM*

*Online*

Interpreters will learn about USAJobs website and become more proficient in their resume and interview skills to get their first or higher level federal positions, particularly in the National Park Service.

Marie Malo is a interpretation supervisor/park ranger at the Grand Canyon. She has been an interpreter for fifteen years, five with the US Forest Service and ten, working for the National Park Service. Her greatest goal as a leader is to promote learning, growth, and inclusion with her team members, visitors, partners, stakeholders and now, you!

[https://www.interpnet.com/NAI/interp/Certification/Other\\_Training/Webinars/nai/\\_certification/Webinars.aspx?hkey=7c32c73e-3c21-4540-998e-45c82a050a96](https://www.interpnet.com/NAI/interp/Certification/Other_Training/Webinars/nai/_certification/Webinars.aspx?hkey=7c32c73e-3c21-4540-998e-45c82a050a96)

### Webinar: Living with Wildlife - Backyard Edition

*December 10 from 5:00 PM - 5:45 PM*

*Online*

Urban biologists Erin Basiger and Jessica Merklng will cover common wild animals found in urban/suburban areas, best practices to attract or dissuade wildlife from your backyard, and ways to minimize conflict with neighborhood visitors. Registration is required to attend. An email will be sent to registered participants before the event inviting them to a Microsoft Teams meeting. There will be time for live Q&A at the end of the presentation. For more information or to register, go to [eventbrite.com/e/webinar-living-with-wildlife-backyard-edition-tickets-127176443165](https://eventbrite.com/e/webinar-living-with-wildlife-backyard-edition-tickets-127176443165).



# ABOUT THE EEC

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 black 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](http://www.elkhartindiana.org/eec) or on our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/ElkhartEnvironmentalCenter](https://www.facebook.com/ElkhartEnvironmentalCenter). Feel free to also stop by and say hi!



## CONTACT INFO



(574) 293-5070



[www.elkhartindiana.org/eec](http://www.elkhartindiana.org/eec)



[www.facebook.com/ElkhartEnvironmentalCenter](https://www.facebook.com/ElkhartEnvironmentalCenter)



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## PROJECT & PROGRAM PHOTOS



River Clean Up  
Crews 2020

Waterfall Drive  
(top)

American Park  
(right)



Haunted Walk Through the Woods  
Decorations



Eastern Prairie Burn Attempt  
October 2020

