

Elkhart Environmental Center Volunteer Newsletter

Spring 2021 / Issue 26

MARCH

EnviroFest Planning Committee Meeting

Monday, March 2nd 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Styrofoam & Electronic Recycling Day

Thursday, March 18th 8:00 AM - 3:00 PM
at Recycling Works

Beeswax Program

Thursday, March 18th
Online

Goshen College Volunteer Day

Saturday, March 20th 12:30 PM - 2:30 PM

EEC Easter Egg Hunt

Starting March 27th

APRIL

EnviroFest Committee Meeting

Monday, April 6th 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM

EEC Closed for City Holiday

Friday, April 2nd Good Friday

Earth Day Activities

See Page 3 and Page 5 for details about programs/activities celebrating Earth Day all month long! All programs are free and open to the public. Registration is required.

Adopt-A-Plot Opens

Monday, April 26th

Learning Garden Prep

Wednesday, April 28th 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM

MAY

EnviroFest Committee Meeting

Monday, May 4th 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM

EEC Closed for City Holiday

Tuesday, May 5th Election Day

EEC Closed for City Holiday

Monday, May 25th Memorial Day

(stay tuned for new programs/activities)

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FEATURED UPDATES

Staff Update

This past winter, the Elkhart Environmental Center hired its new Supervisor, Jeff Zavatsky. Born and raised in Elkhart, he is excited to be able to lead the EEC--which is now going on its 30th year!

The EEC has been very fortunate in its history to have great leadership and direction. Jeff hopes to continue supporting the EEC's success through the Master Plan. He is passionate about both the outdoors and wildlife, and is looking forward to debuting the new prairie and wildflower areas which will be planted later this spring.

In addition to these (and other exciting ongoing projects), the city was just awarded a Next Level Trails Grant, which will run through the Environmental Center and help connect Goshen and Elkhart via the Mapleheart trail. There will be lots of new and exciting things happening here at our 60-acre facility this year and beyond!

Jeff is looking forward to meeting and working with all the volunteers (which are the heart of the EEC) and interacting with the guests and visitors. As conditions get safer--and the weather gets warmer!--we encourage you to stop by for a program or volunteer opportunity and introduce yourself!

WHAT'S NEW

GARDEN ADOPTIONS

The EEC is opening up adoptions for our gardens! Once again, in addition to being able to [adopt plots](#) in our community garden, volunteers can also [adopt entire gardens](#) around the EEC! Interested in adopting? Come out to the EEC to check out the available gardens and plots. Adopters are welcome to use our seeds and tools (please coordinate with EEC staff). Adoptions will be open until all plots/gardens are claimed.

Join us on Wednesday, April 28 from 10 AM - 12 PM to help us prep our Learning Garden plots by weeding and adding fresh mulch! Details on [page 5](#).



Tree Transplanting Day

Help us prepare for our Earth Day event! We will be transplanting about 250 sapling trees into pots/buckets with fresh soil and compost before they are given away to community members on Earth Day.

On Friday, April 16 we will begin transplanting the saplings at 4:00 PM and expect to finish around 6:00 PM. Tools and materials will be provided.

The more help we get, the faster it goes! We've had some fantastic volunteer teams the past 2 years, who have breezed through the transplanting in record time!

Please feel free to bring friends and family with you when you volunteer!

Styrofoam & Electronic Recycling

The first quarterly drop-off of 2021 will take place on Thursday, March 18. Stop by Recycle Works (605 Mason St.) in Elkhart between 8 AM - 3 PM to drop off any Styrofoam or electronics for recycling.

Learn more!

Learn more about how to reduce your impact and recycle more by checking out our [Environmental Moment](#).

Beeswax Program

Did you know that the EEC has been hosting a Zero-Waste Series? Participants signed up in January to learn more about zero-waste lifestyles and tried out at least one new zero-waste activity each week. As part of our Zero-Waste series, we're partnering with the Elkhart Public Library to expand the scope and give more people the chance to dabble in zero-waste by learning to make beeswax wrap!

Beeswax wrap is made from organic cotton and beeswax! It's a great, reusable way to store leftover food. With this program, participants will receive all the materials they need to make their very own beeswax wraps at home and our program leader, Emma, will walk you through the project via video. The walkthrough video will be available on Facebook starting March 18.

Also, swing by the Main Branch of the Elkhart Public Library after March 18 to check out their Zero-Waste display!

CHANGES FOR 2021

Join us as we celebrate Earth Day all month long! Smaller activities and events will be open to the public starting April 1--including virtual activities, small in-person events, and volunteer opportunities!

VIRTUAL ACTIVITIES

April 1	Mayor's Water Challenge Kickoff Video	Tune in to Facebook to check it out and learn more!
April 6, 13, 20	EEC Trivia Night	Sign up on your own or with a team to tackle some Earth Day/environmental trivia! More details below.
April 25	Wildflower Seed Paper Making	Learn how to make paper with seeds inside! Perfect for Mother/Father's Day cards. Tune in to Facebook at 10 AM.

VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

April 10, 15, 21	Park Cleanup	Help make the parks a pleasant place to be this Earth Day! More details on page 5 .
April 16	Tree Transplanting	Help us pot 200 trees for our Earth Day tree giveaway! More details on page 5 .
April 23	Tree Planting	Work with local HartWood Tree Care to help us plant a grove of chestnut trees at the EEC! More details below.

IN-PERSON ACTIVITIES

All in-person activities will be limited to less than 25 people. Registration is required, as are masks and social distancing. If you have any questions, please contact EEC staff.

March 27 Easter Egg Hunt

Hunt for colorful wooden eggs hidden at the EEC and select parts around the city. If you find one, bring it to the EEC or the Tolson Center for a gift bag! (Limit one egg per family).

April 10, 22, 27 Guided Bird Hike

Join Ranger McCray for a peaceful guided bird hike! Ranger McCray will be hosting multiple bird hikes throughout the month. If you do not have your own binoculars and/or bird guide, we will have some on loan. [Register online](#).

April 10 at Sterling Park starting at 8 AM

April 22 at the EEC starting at 8 AM

April 27 at Pinewood Park starting at 6 PM

April 14 Seed Bomb Workshop

A great way to spread seeds! Join us at the Studebaker pavilion from 4 PM - 5 PM or 6 PM - 7 PM to learn how to make your own wildflower seed bomb (and make one to take home with you!). Family-friendly, kids welcome! [Registration limited](#).

April 17 Live Fish & Stormwater Presentation

A live fish presentation by Elkhart's Aquatic Biologist and an interactive stormwater presentation by our Stormwater Manager! Join us from 11 AM - 1 PM at the EEC. Each presentation will last about 45 minutes. [Registrations limited](#).

April 24 Tree/Wildflower Seed Giveaway

Our classic Earth Day favorite is back! Stop by the EEC from 10 AM - 12 PM to pick up a free native tree and wildflower seed packet via drive-through. Please [register](#) ahead of time with your preferred tree as supplies are limited.

EARTH DAY TRIVIA NIGHT

We are very excited to offer a brand new virtual Earth Day experience: trivia nights! We'll be hosting Earth Day Trivia via the city's video conferencing program, WebEx. Participants can play individually or as part of a group. We'll be utilizing breakout rooms so that team members from different households can collaborate.

Trivia will cover fun facts about Earth Day and environmental/sustainability topics. The main goal of these trivia nights is just to have fun and learn something. The winning team will receive a package of tree saplings at our free tree giveaway on April 24.

If you've never used WebEx before, don't worry! We'll do a brief orientation before the trivia to make sure everyone is up to speed.

Register here to sign up on your own or as part of a group: <https://signup.com/go/HjnblTL>. Registration is required and limited to 3 teams per night, 5 members per team.

We are offering 3 different trivia nights: April 6, 13, and 20. Each night will have different questions. You're welcome to sign up for 1 or all 3.

Limit 1 prize per team.

PAST EVENTS & PROGRAMS

HOLIDAY HOORAH!

We once again partnered with the Elkhart Public Library for our third annual Holiday Hoorah! This year, we took the program virtual. Participants registered to pick up a bag of materials and tuned in to our Facebook page for a step-by-step walkthrough of how to make recycled holiday crafts such as light bulb/pinecone snowmen, paper towel roll Rudolfs, and puzzle piece snowflakes (pictures on **page 6**). This year, we were able to provide kits to 50 people, and even more were able to tune in to the how-to video at their convenience.

If you are interested in up-cycled and recycled crafting, you may enjoy some of our other events, such as our Eco-Valentine's Day, Earth Day, and EnviroFest. We're always looking for new ideas and volunteer help. If you're interested, please [contact EEC staff!](#)

Zero-Waste Series

We started the year off with a new virtual program series: Zero-Waste! Over 30 participants signed up and have continued the 12 week program with us!

Each week, participants learned about a different aspect of a Zero-Waste lifestyle and tried at least one new thing. At the end of the program, participants who have kept up with at least half of all program activities will be entered for a chance to win a Zero-Waste gift basket with items like bamboo toothbrushes, a reusable microwave popcorn container, and other household items that can help reduce waste. The program still has a few weeks left, but we have been so excited to see participants try new things and come up with creative solutions to reducing their waste!

For those who didn't sign up for the Zero-Waste series, you can still tune in to our video series: Say Goodbye To which is available on our Facebook page. Each video in this series shows a DIY walkthrough for things like making your own hot cocoa mix, lip balm, paper towel alternative, etc. DIY projects like these are another fun way to reduce waste from packaging from items you might otherwise purchase at the store.

While you're on our Facebook page, you can also check out our Upbeat Eco Minutes--a series of articles highlighting uplifting accomplishments on the environmental front.

CLIMATE ACTION CONVERSATIONS

In 2020, we hosted a series of Climate Action Conversations. Our goal has been to connect with the community and get your feedback on concerns about climate change while we develop a climate action plan for the city of Elkhart.

We are continuing to develop the Climate Action Plan with city departments and will continue to reach out to the community for feedback. You can find further information about our climate action plan and local climate change research on our website at elkhartindiana.org/eec.

The exciting news is that we're not stopping at a Climate Action Plan draft. We have been accepted for another year with the Indiana Sustainability Development Program. This year, we will focus on how to implement initiatives such as solar energy and electric vehicle infrastructure.

We look forward to providing you further updates of our progress and from hearing from you about your concerns and expectations.

If you would like to be added to our Climate Action Plan email update list, please email elkhartenvironmentalcenter@gmail.com.

If you have any questions or would like more information, please feel free to reach out to EEC staff at EECmail@coei.org or call (574) 293-5070.

OPPORTUNITIES

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

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

Email Annie.Klehfoth@coei.org or call (574) 293-5070.

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

Goshen College Volunteer Day

Saturday, March 20

12:30 PM - 2:30 PM

[Join](#) Goshen College admitted students as they help us spruce up the EEC for spring visitors!

Sterling Park Clean Up

Saturday, April 10

10 AM - 12 PM

[Join us](#) as we walk the walk for Earth Day! We'll be picking up trash and tidying the park. Supplies provided.

Tree Transplanting Day

Friday, April 16

4 PM - 6 PM

[Help us](#) transplant tree saplings into pots before our Earth Day event! See **page 2** for more details.

Riverwalk Clean Up

Thursday, April 15

11 AM - 1 PM

[Stop by](#) and help with our lunchtime cleanup! We'll be picking up trash behind McDonald's in Downtown.

Tree Giveaway

Saturday, April 24

10 AM - 12 PM

[Help us](#) hand out free trees! Our tree giveaway this year will be done via drive-through. We could use some extra hands passing trees out.

TBD Clean Up

Saturday, April 10

10 AM - 12 PM

[Join us](#) for our last cleanup! Location is still to be determined, so stay tuned for updates.

Adopt-A-Plot & Adopt-A-Garden

Monday, April 26

Adopt a plot to grow your own veggies or adopt an entire garden and help make the EEC beautiful this summer! For more information [contact EEC staff](#).

EnviroFest Planning Team

1st Monday of the month

6 PM - 7 PM

Virtual via WebEx

[Help us](#) plan our 25th EnviroFest! New volunteers are always welcome! Feel free to [contact EEC staff](#) for past meeting minutes and [more information](#).

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & TRAINING

Incorporating Emergent Curriculum Virtual Workshop

Tuesday, March 20

4 PM - 5:30 PM

Online

Join Merry Lea educators Carol Good-Elliott and Marcos Stoltzfus in this virtual workshop as they share examples from their work at Merry Lea and help educators from all backgrounds learn how to incorporate emergent curriculum into their own classroom. Cost \$15. Register at www.goshen.edu/merrylea/emergent-curriculum-workshop.

Regional Interpretive Workshop: Great Lakes

March 23 - 25

Online

Tune in to live and recorded sessions and learn more about new ideas and creative problem solving in the world of interpretation! Click nairegion4.weebly.com/regional-interpretive-workshops.html for more information.

PlayCleanGo Awareness Week & How to Integrate PlayCleanGo Outreach tools

May 5

1 PM

Online

In this webinar, NAISMA's Program Manager, Krista Lutzke, will share new public and professional outreach tools and materials. This is a don't miss event for anyone that communicates with the public and other professionals about preventing invasive species. Go to naisma.org/programs/professional-development/webinars for more information.

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 or on our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/ElkhartEnvironmentalCenter. Feel free to also stop by and say hi!



CONTACT INFO



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www.elkhartindiana.org/eec



www.Facebook.com/ElkhartEnvironmentalCenter



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PROGRAM PHOTOS



*Holiday Hoorah
crafts*



If you haven't seen Macie's Off Trail Adventures video, check it out on Facebook!