

Elkhart Environmental Center Volunteer Newsletter

Spring 2022 | Issue 30

MARCH

EnviroFest Planning Committee Meeting

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

Mystery Hike

March 15th- 31st Anytime

Styrofoam & Electronic Recycling Day

Thursday, March 17th 8:00 AM - 3:00 PM
at Recycling Works

Earth Day Art Contest: Collection

March 21st- 25th 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM

APRIL

EEC Easter Egg Hunt

Starting April 1st

EnviroFest Committee Meeting

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

EEC Closed for City Holiday

Friday, April 15th 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.

MAY

EnviroFest Committee Meeting

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

EEC Closed for City Holiday

Tuesday, May 5th Election Day

Bicycle Bonanza

Friday, May 20th 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

EEC Closed for City Holiday

Monday, May 25th Memorial Day

(stay tuned for new programs/activities)

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FEATURED UPDATE

Friends of the EEC

We are working to reinstate the Friends of the EEC group, and we're looking for volunteers like YOU to join in!

The Friends of the EEC was a 501 C3 nonprofit organization comprised of volunteers who supported the EEC programs and events by helping with fundraising and volunteers. The Friends group will be a wonderful support to the EEC in many ways. One great example is that, as a 501 C3 nonprofit, the Friends group would be eligible for funding and grants that the EEC, as a government office, cannot pursue.

We're working to reinstate the Friends group and will need a board of volunteers to help lead the way, as well as interested members.

If you're interested in joining the board, or just interested in supporting the group, let us know!

We need at least 3 more members to have a full board. Board members will meet monthly (virtual options available).

If you have any questions or are interested in joining, feel free to stop in, give us a call (574-293-5070) or send us an email (EECmail@coei.org) to let us know!

WHAT'S NEW

MYSTERY HIKE

Come out to the EEC between March 15th and 31st for a self-guided mystery hike through our trails! Use a map and solve clues using nature knowledge to make your way through different stations. Solve the mystery and be entered into a drawing to win a prize! Fun for all ages, particularly families. Free. Stop by anytime, dawn to dusk!

BICYCLE BONANZA

Celebrate Bike to Work Day & Bicycle Safety Month all at once! Starting at 6 PM, join a bike ride to the EEC: Elkhart County Parks will be leading a ride to the EEC from Ox Bow and a separate ride will start from Downtown Elkhart and end at the EEC. Both groups will be able to enjoy a fun hike and snack, and even get a tune-up from Bike Elkhart before heading back to their starting locations. All activities are free and family-friendly. Register for the Ox Bow ride here: elkhart-environmental-center.ticketleap.com/bicycle-bonanza.

Lucy's Upgrades

Lucy, our resident box turtle, recently received a new, improved home when Girl Scouts Troop 180 built her a large, mobile terrarium. This year, we are renovating her habitat to make it even better!

Improvements will include a waterfall, several live plants, and a wider view into Lucy's upgraded environment. Renovations are starting this month!

Check for updates on our Facebook page, or stop in this spring to check out the upgrades for yourself! While Lucy is shy, she is very popular (especially with kids) so we expect her home makeover to be a hit!

Styrofoam & Electronic Recycling

The first quarterly drop-off of 2022 will take place on Thursday, March 17. 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](#).

Earth Day Art Contest

New this year, we are hosting an Earth Day Upcycled Art Contest, aimed at highlighting recycling and repurposing materials. The Earth Day Upcycled Art Contest will showcase local artists and sustainable art, and winning submissions will help support the EEC's environmental education efforts.

The contest will feature adult and youth submissions and will award 1st, 2nd, 3rd place and popular-vote winners (and prizes) to each category. All submissions will be displayed at the EEC as part of our month-long Earth Day celebrations. Winning submissions will be donated to the EEC's EnviroFest silent auction to help raise funds for environmental education.

Submissions must be dropped off at the EEC between March 21 - March 25 during staff hours (8 AM - 5 PM).

Rules and details can be found on our Earth Day web page: www.elkhartindiana.org/earthday and on our [Facebook event page](#). For questions, email EECmail@coei.org.

Easter Egg Hunt

Looking for a fun reason to get outside and enjoy nature? Join our Easter egg scavenger hunt! Once again, we've hidden wooden Easter eggs around some of the city parks and the EEC. If you find one, return it to the EEC or the Tolson Center to redeem a prize. Limit of one egg per family. Check out www.elkhartindiana.org/eec or our [Facebook event page](#) for details.

Earth Day Trivia Night

Earth Day Trivia Night is back--in person! Sign up as a team or individual to join us for an Earth Day-themed trivia night AND pizza at the EEC on Tuesday, April 5 from 6PM - 7 PM. Registration is \$5 per person (ages 5 and under free). Space is limited to 20 people. This event must have at least 10 people registered by Monday, April 4 or it will either switch to a virtual option (depending on interest) or be canceled. Register at elkhart-environmental-center.ticketleap.com/earth-day-trivia-night.

National Walking Day

What better way to celebrate Earth Month than getting outside? Come walk the trails at the EEC anytime on Wednesday, April 6. Enjoy the spring weather and get fresh air while you get your steps in for the day. Complete a trail punch card by visiting stations on all eleven of our trails to be entered to win a prize!

Natural Egg Dyeing

Join us at the EEC on Saturday, April 9 between 10 AM and 1 PM to dye Easter eggs with all-natural materials! Discover the beautiful dye colors that items like cabbage, turmeric, and beets can create, just in time for Easter. This event is family-friendly and limited to 15 people. Registration is required. Look for our registration link on our [Facebook page](#) or [website](#).

Tree Transplanting Day

Help us prepare for our Earth Day event! We will be transplanting about 300 sapling trees into pots/buckets with fresh soil and compost before they are given away to community members on Earth Day.

On **Friday, April 22** 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! Let us know you're coming by signing up at <https://signup.com/go/FCLsqKs>.

Environmental Book Exchange

Join us at the EEC on Saturday, April 23 between 10 AM and 12 PM for an eco-friendly book swap! Pick up secondhand books, magazines, and field guides about different environmental topics and chat with others who share the same interests. If you have any eco-materials you would like to rehome, bring them along! This event is family-friendly and registration is required (look for link on our [Facebook page](#) and [website](#)).

Clean Ups

We're celebrating Earth Day by walking the walk (in more ways than one!): hosting neighborhood cleanups around Elkhart and we would love for you to join us! The dates/locations of the cleanups will be posted on our [Facebook page](#) and our [website](#)--please stay tuned!

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

We are looking forward to celebrating the 50th Earth Day in person on **Saturday, April 30 from 10 AM - 1 PM!** We'll be bringing back event favorites such as our free tree giveaway, live woodworking demonstrations, kids activities, and more! This year, the event will also feature Woods on Wheels, a traveling interactive exhibit.

Want to be a part of the event? Volunteer! Volunteers make this event (and all our events) not only possible, but successful! All volunteers will receive training, refreshments, and lunch. Volunteers can also pick up a free tree sapling to take home and plant*. Times and descriptions for the volunteer shifts are below.

Please also check out other Earth Day activities happening throughout the month on **page 3**.

*Limit one tree per household. Must pick up before the event starts.

VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE

8:00 AM	-	10:00 AM	Event Setup	
9:00 AM	-	1:00 PM	Event Volunteers	(9:00 AM orientation)
11:00 AM	-	12:00 PM	Spring Seeds & Starters Exchange	(11:00 AM orientation)
1:00 PM	-	2:30 PM	Event Cleanup	

VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

Event Set Up

Help get everything ready for the event! We'll be putting up tables, chairs, canopy tents, banners, etc.

Adopt-A-Tree & Event Info

Help pass out free trees and answer questions about trees and event (information provided).

Spring Seeds & Starters Exchange

Assist our emcee with setup 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 (~20 minutes) for visitors throughout the event.

EEC Booth

Help our visitors learn more about the EEC! (Informational flyers and posters available, and training provided).

Art Contest Showcase/Cabin Greeter

Welcome guests and answer questions about the EEC and our Art Contest (handouts available, training provided).

Habitat Restoration

Help remove invasive species and plant native trees in our forest ecosystem!

Event Clean Up

Help us put it all away! We'll be taking down and putting away tents, tables, chairs, etc.

How Do I Sign Up?

You can sign up to volunteer by going to our online volunteer registration at SignUp.com.

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. Kids are welcome to volunteer at the event (however, anyone under the age of 16 will need to be accompanied by a parent/guardian). Volunteers under the age of 18 will need a parent/guardian's signature on their volunteer waiver.

More Information

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

HOLIDAY HOORAH!

For our fourth annual Holiday Hoorah!, we made edible holiday decorations for our wildlife. Families made cranberry and popcorn garlands, peanut butter pinecones, holiday-shaped birdseed ornaments, and other fun foods to decorate an evergreen tree in our western prairie (or to take home and decorate their backyard!).

Our trail camera captured plenty of deer and bird visitors enjoying the treats throughout the following weeks. You can check out some of the pictures and short videos which were posted to our [Facebook page](#).

If you are interested in up-cycled and recycled crafting, you may enjoy some of our other events, such as 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, in-person version of our Zero-Waste program series. This year, the series focused on great ways to be more sustainable (and save money) around the house and in day-to-day activities.

Participants not only got to learn about Zero-Waste opportunities, but also had fun engaging first-hand! Each meeting featured a hands-on activity such as making a reusable tote bag from an old t-shirt; making reusable beeswax wrap, lip balm, all-purpose cleaner, and soft pretzels. Participants also got to have fun with the topic by playing Zero Waste Jeopardy, Zero Waste Savings, Pictionary, and going on a scavenger hunt!

For those who didn't sign up for the Zero-Waste series, you can still get some great info and tips from our Facebook page. Our program leader, Emma, made some great infographics and posts to help you on your Zero Waste journey!

If you missed out on this series, but would be interested in similar programs in the future, let us know! Send us an email at EECmail@coei.org.

And don't forget to stop by our 25th EnviroFest event on Saturday, August 20 from 3 PM - 9 PM at Island Park for more fun ways to lead a sustainable lifestyle! Check out updates on vendors and activities at www.ElkhartEnviroFest.com.

Self-Led Programs

We know that everyone's schedule is different and sometimes it can be tough to make it out for one of our scheduled programs, so we've tried to make it a little easier!

This winter, we offered a couple of self-led programs, meaning that families could stop by any time to participate in a fun activity and learn something new.

Some of our self-led programs included a Winter Sensory Scavenger Hunt and a Kids' Winter Birding Scavenger Hunt. We posted signs up along our trails for families to follow along with and provided scavenger hunt guides and a birding kit in the cabin that families could borrow and use anytime during their visit.

We're looking forward to offering more self-led programs this year! If you have ideas (or requests!) for a self-led program that you'd like to see, let us know. Send us an email at EECmail@coei.org.



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>.

EnviroFest Planning Team

1st Monday of the month

6 PM - 7 PM

[Help us](#) plan our 25th EnviroFest! New volunteers are always welcome! What's more fun than party planning? Help design our Kids Area, generate donations for our silent auction, design our volunteer t-shirts, and more!

Feel free to [contact EEC staff](#) for past meeting minutes and [more information](#).

Adopt: Trails, Gardens, Plots

Monday, April 26

Adopt a plot to grow your own veggies or adopt an entire garden and/or trail to help make the EEC beautiful this summer! This is a great program for individuals or groups. It's a great way to spend time outdoors and enjoy the best of the season! Tools and seeds are available upon request. For more information [contact EEC staff](#).

Tree Transplanting Day

Friday, April 22

4 PM - 6 PM

[Help us](#) transplant tree saplings into pots before our Earth Day event! We have about 300 trees to pot before our free tree giveaway, but it goes fast! Past volunteer groups have potted over 200 trees in less than an hour! See **page 2** for more details.

Earth Day

Saturday, April 30

10 AM - 1 PM

[Help us](#) host a great Earth Day on the 50th anniversary of the holiday! Volunteer with family or friends! Volunteers will receive free snacks/lunch throughout their shifts. We'll need help with our free tree giveaway, kids activities, stewardship activity, setup/cleanup and more. If you'd like to volunteer as part of a group, or would like more information [contact EEC staff](#)

Check out **page 4** for details on the event and volunteer roles.

Check out more opportunities on our Facebook page or website!

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & TRAINING

Sustainability Lecture Series

March 1 - April 5 (Wednesdays)

7:00 PM - 8:30 PM

Wiekamp Hall Room 1001 on IUSB campus

Free and open to the public, this series features sustainability and innovation leaders in South Bend and the region. All events take place Wednesday evenings from 7:00-8:30 PM in Wiekamp Hall Rm 1001 on the IU South Bend campus. Click <https://clas.iusb.edu/centers/cs-future/events/lecture-series.html> for more information.

Nature PreK Observation and Professional Development

Monday, April 18

11:30 AM - 3:00 PM

Merry Lea Farmstead | 2152 S 425 W, Albion, IN 46701

Join a guided observation of a Nature Preschool. This facilitated site visit not only includes live, in-person observation of children and teachers in our outdoor classroom, but also accompanying learning experiences designed to create a memorable and impactful training for education practitioners. Cost \$45. Register at goshen.edu/merrylea/nature-prek-observation-and-professional-development-2/.

Hoosier Riverwatch Training

May 13

9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Bonneyville Mill County Park

Learn hands-on water quality monitoring method, aquatic habitat, and chemical and biological assessment techniques. Once trained, certified educators are qualified to teach these methods and topics to their students. Workshops are free of charge. But it is important to register in advance (please contact if you can no longer attend). Contact Krista Daniels at kdaniels@elkhartcounty.com or (574) 875 07422 to register.

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

 (574) 293-5070

 www.elkhartindiana.org/eec

 www.facebook.com/ElkhartEnvironmentalCenter

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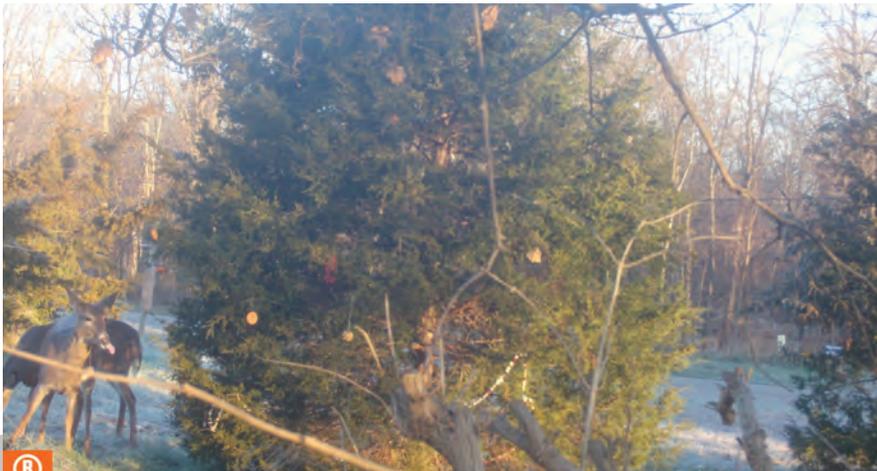
PROGRAM PHOTOS



Making edible tree decorations



Creating a tasty holiday tree for the birds



Deer enjoying our decorated tree

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