



Urban Ecology Center Reopens Washington Park Branch with Grand Reopening and Winterfest event

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Milwaukee, WI, January 22, 2025 – The Urban Ecology Center® (UEC) is thrilled to host the grand reopening of its Washington Park branch on February 1st, 2025, following a transformative renovation and expansion project. The Winterfest community event will begin immediately after the reopening ceremony.

The newly expanded Washington Park branch will allow the UEC to significantly expand program offerings. With the renovation, the UEC plans to more than double the capacity of its Neighborhood Environmental Education Project (NEEP), expanding from 13 to 31 schools within three years. This renewed education and community center will also enhance preschool environmental education, amplifying UEC's impact on Milwaukee's youth and families.

"We can't wait to unveil this revitalized community asset and invite even more of our community to connect with nature," said Terry Evans, Washington Park Branch Director, Urban Ecology Center. "The building is beautiful but we consider it to be a vessel for connecting neighbors to the nature found within Washington Park."

The Grand Reopening Ceremony will take place at 10:00 am on February 1st, 2025, and will feature remarks from UEC leadership, elected officials, and community partners. Following the ceremony, at 11:00 am, the Winterfest community event will kick off with family-friendly winter activities, tours of the new facility and opportunities to learn more about the UEC's environmental education programs.

"The renovation of the Washington Park Branch is a testament to our unwavering commitment to this community and our belief in the transformative power of nature," said Jen Hense, Executive Director, Urban Ecology Center. "As we open the doors to this revitalized space, we look forward to deepening our connection with our neighbors and continuing to inspire a love of the environment for generations to come."

Washington Park, a Milwaukee County Park, has a long and fascinating history. Wisconsin land is home to native tribes including the Potawatomi, Menominee, and Ho-Chunk. This area became parkland and was designed by Frederick Law Olmsted in 1866 and was home to the Milwaukee Zoo from 1892 to 1961. In 2007 the Urban Ecology Center became part of the Washington Park community when it opened its branch in the former boathouse on the Lagoon.

The Washington Park improvements are part of UEC's Imagine Campaign, launched in 2021 in response to community input calling for an expanded reach of its programs. Thanks to the generosity of countless community supporters the UEC has nearly reached its \$19.6M fundraising goal for the Washington Park project.

For More Information Contact:

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About Imagine Capital Campaign:

The UEC's Imagine Campaign will enable us to connect more individuals with the transformative power of nature, ensuring our organization's lasting impact for future generations. It will also help us expand our reach, share our model for urban nature more widely, and enhance our influence.

Plans include:

Washington Park Improvements

Riverland Development, including Prairie Springs on Park new event space and Community Green Space

Endowment Growth

Organizational Excellence

For more information about the Imagine Campaign and to make a donation, please visit

secure.ggiv.com/event/uecimaginecampaign/

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About The Urban Ecology Center:

The Urban Ecology Center has been delivering its mission of connecting people in cities to nature and each other for nearly three decades in Milwaukee. The UEC provides environmental education programs for children and adults, maintains and enhances nearby green spaces, and conducts wildlife and habitat research projects in these urban environments. The Urban Ecology Center serves tens of thousands of visitors, including students from over 60 neighborhood schools, and helps provide a positive, safe place for everyone to learn more about how the world around us works. For more information, visit www.urbanecologycenter.org or call (414) 964-8505.

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