



**GREAT WATERS GROUP
NEWSLETTER**

WWW.GREATWATERSGROUP.ORG greatwatersgroupsc@gmail.com

Spring, 2016 NO. 1

Celebrate urban wilderness

*By Dan Buckler
Outings Chair*

Towering western mountains roofed by perennial snow. Deep-cut canyons carved from ancient sediment. Those images of grandeur are magnetic, but epic landscapes are not how most people experience the outdoors.

Rather, the wonders of nature are witnessed every day right outside one’s window, or just down the street. From pocket park oases to the swaying, stream-side willows of a county greenspace, neighborhood nature is vitally important to neighborhood people. That means all of us.

The Great Waters Group of the Sierra Club will partner with the Urban Ecology Center (UEC) this year to celebrate our urban wilderness on Earth Day. Urban greenspaces are vital to our lives, providing peace, safety, food, fun, exercise and community, and they are vital to maintaining native flora and fauna. These special places deserve recognition and celebration. The event will include an Urban Wilderness Expression Contest.

On April 23, Urban Ecology Center and Great Waters Group
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Damien Finnegan demonstrates one way to enjoy the urban wilderness experience that will be highlighted when GWG and the Urban Ecology Center combine for a celebration of Earth Day.

Spring Programs

*Mayfair Mall, Community Room G110,
Garden Suites East.
Free and open to the public*

The Ecology of Fossil Fuels: pipelines, refineries
Monday, Feb 15, 7p.m.

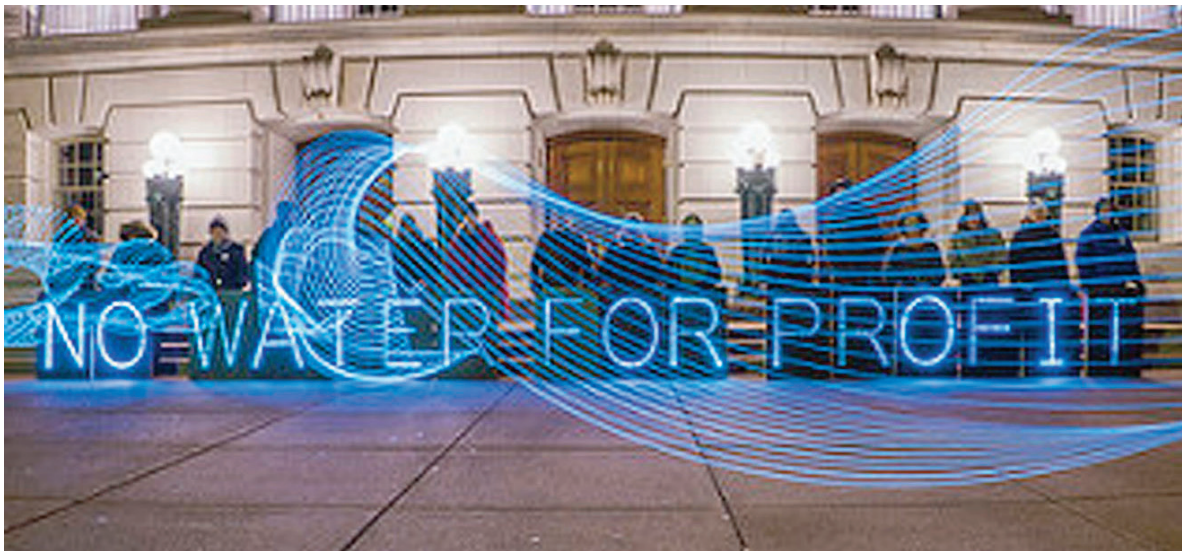
Hear from Margaret Swedish, author and spiritualist, about her long study into and first-hand knowledge of the fuels industry. Learn about their interconnectedness and their intentions during a time of record low oil prices.

Living in the Blast Zone

*Monday, March 21, 7p.m. following
St. Patrick’s Day green potluck at 6:15p.m.*

The dangers are real. The risks to our water, health and safety are great. The time for action is now. Join members of Citizens Acting for Rail Safety (CARS) MKE area, to learn about hazards posed by explosive crude oil trains rushing through our neighborhoods, and about effective community responses from concerned citizens. Presenters: Susan Bietila, Brian Chiu, Janine Arseneau. [Facebook.com/SafeRails.MkeArea](https://www.facebook.com/SafeRails.MkeArea); web: SafeRails.MkeArea.com.

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The Overpass Light Brigade sent a message reminding everyone that clean water is a public right.

Photo by Joseph Brusky

Clean water is everyone's right

*By Dianne Dagelen
Conservation Chair*

Back in 2009 Milwaukeans successfully resisted the short-sightedness of possible privatization of the City's public water system. Flint, Michigan wasn't so lucky.

This month the world is reeling from disastrous news that the private company managing Flint's water system since 2014 made a money-saving decision to pump water from the Flint River instead of from the Great Lakes.

This was water poisoned with lead, causing permanent brain damage to Flint's residents, most of whom are low-income people of color. Water so corrosive that General Motors switched to an alternate source over a year ago. Water that was never prop-

erly tested as required by the federal Environmental Protection Agency.

Now on the heels of Flint's misery comes the Wisconsin state legislature pushing a new law that allows municipalities to privatize their water systems without the currently required referendum. And the legislation is being fast-tracked without a public hearing. A lobby group, Aqua America, is reportedly supporting the proposed law.

The next time we reach for a glass of water, it's good to remind ourselves that clean water is a human right and not a commodity. And that the public should protect its right to vote on public water.

Ice Age Trail hike will offer lessons on coping with winter

Join us as we traverse the Ice Age Trail at a time when most people are waiting for the winter thaw to be over. We will power over 21 miles of beautiful trails, including those that enable great views from the top of Bald Bluff and the Stone Elephant.

We will camp at a shelter along the way. While we hike and camp, we will learn about how best to stay dry and warm in a cold, wet environment.

Date: Saturday and Sunday, April 2-3.

Distance: 21 miles.

Location: Whitewater to Eagle in Southern Unit of the Kettle Moraine State Forest.

Leader: Alex Tarra. More information and RSVP at tarrsas@gmail.com.

Notes from the Chair

Earth Day is meant to be shared. For 2016 our Great Waters Group is partnering with Urban Ecology Center at Washington Park for an Earth Day of Service.

Hands-on planting, sharing a meal, talking with local green groups and enjoying the artistry of our Urban Wilderness contestants will be the order of the day. Venice Williams is our keynote speaker. See our Earth Day article for more details.

Please join us as we continue to build environmental community and care for our common home.

Dianne Dagelen, Chair

Support environmental candidates

Don't forget to vote in the spring elections! As always Sierra Club encourages you to consider candidates who promote sustainability and environmental justice.

These volunteers are our heroes

By Janet Anderson

Mike and Judy Howden have been active in city causes since they came to Milwaukee in 1968. They have worked on neighborhood crime and safety committees, helped start an alternative school and involved themselves in a number of initiatives related to poverty. They founded the Milwaukee Clean Clothes Campaign, joined with retailers and government bodies to promote non-sweatshop consumer purchasing and worked with the WI Fair Trade Campaign and with SweatFree Communities.

These experiences evolved into the beginning of the Milwaukee Fair Trade Coalition, the planning of Fair Trade Crawls, and the founding of the Four Corners of the World Fair Trade store at 54th and Vliet Street.

Sister Suzanne Moynihan of the School Sisters of Notre Dame has been a volunteer in justice and peace work since the 1970s. She initiated a Global Education Office to help raise awareness among the Sisters in more than 30 countries, in addition to being involved in coordinating a tutoring center in Milwaukee, leading a nonprofit, and starting an education organization based on Earth spirituality named the Sunseed Eco-Education Center.

The center was later re-named EDGE (Education Dreams for a Green Era). Included in its programs were ecological films, visioning the future, Earth Day celebrations, environmental presentations on fracking, water, climate change, and more.

Marjie Tomter serves on the boards of a number of conservation organizations, involving conservation land preservation, zoning and land trust. She has worked tirelessly to bring county, state, and federal agencies together with businesses and local and private groups to achieve environmental protection, economic viability and sustainable conservation goals for Ozaukee



Mike and Judy Howden



Marjie Tomter



Sister Suzanne Moynihan

County. A retired educator, she owns a farm and has horses, organic gardens and perma-culture in Ozaukee County.

She coordinates an annual Treasures of Oz event, highlighting seven park and preserve sites in Ozaukee County, inviting people to learn about and enjoy the natural beauty that the county has to offer. This year's Treasures of Oz event will be held on Saturday, June 18. Put it on your calendar.

Four share award at Holiday Party

By Janet Anderson

Members of the Great Waters Group and guests enjoyed another fun gathering at our annual Holiday Party and Fundraiser where four dedicated volunteers were honored as our Environmental Heroes of 2015.

Sharing the award at the Dec. 13 event at the Wil O Way Recreation Center in Wauwatosa were Mike and Judy Howden, Sister Suzanne Moynihan and Marjie Tomter.

Attendees shared a delicious Middle-Eastern meal from Aladdin Deli, and many left that evening with winning items from a varied selection of silent auction donations. After dinner we were entertained by the local band, Green Sails ("Green" for Irish music and ecology sustainability "Sails" for sailing). Thank you Amy and Bonnee Beth.

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Thanks also go to the many volunteers who made this special event possible, especially Dave Hetzel, Joan Janus, and Chris Zapf, and to the friends and members who donated auction items. Those included Ed Anderson, Jon Bales, Allen Becker, Dianne Dagelen, Dave Hetzel, Virginia Hirsch, Ron Horn, Maggie and Steve Koller, Dianne Moore, Von Roberts, Jane Stoltz, Marjie Tomter and Chris Zapf.

GWG members are encouraged to patronize these businesses that generously donated auction items: Cold Spoons Gelato, Colectivo Coffee, Four Corners of the World Fair Trade Store, Highlands Café, Jody Janus Massage and Yoga, The Little Read Book, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, Oro di Oliva, Outpost Co-op, Samara Garden and Home, Soaps & Scents, The Spice House, Trader Joe's, Urban Ecology Center, Usinger's Famous Sausage and Valentine Coffee.



Dozens of citizens encircled a Native American Burial Mound at Lake Park, dancing to ceremonial drums while outlined by votive lights in a demonstration organized by the Overpass Light Brigade.

Photo by Joseph Brusky

Speak up to preserve natural treasures

*By Dianne Dagelen
Conservation Chair*

At what cost “property rights”? What is the value of ancient burial sites? Should native people’s physical and spiritual link to the land be preserved? What of our own human cultural heritage?

Under the guise of land-owner rights, our state legislature introduced a bill in January that would legalize property owners’ ability to dig up any designated burial mounds on their land, including those plots that had been previously protected as Indian Burial Mounds.

Built during the Woodland Period (500BC-AD1100), these earthen animal-shaped mounds resemble birds, bears and panthers, and they contain artifacts of those who walked our homeland before us. They are recognized by Native Americans as respectful burial sites of their dead.

CART meeting scheduled

Climate Action Round Table (CART), a coalition of environmental organizations, congregations of faith and political groups, will meet Wednesday, Feb 24, 7 p.m. at the Riverside campus of the Urban Ecology Center.

Our coalition includes ten diverse partners working to raise awareness and spur action on Climate Change. It began in September of 2015 by hosting “Breakfast With Pope Francis,” and subsequent events have included the presentation of George Stone’s report from the Paris climate negotiations, and the documentary “This Changes Everything.”

Please join us. You can access more information about CART by “liking” the Facebook page located at “CART.”

In the 1840’s scientists such as Increase Lapham mapped more than 20,000 such mounds in Wisconsin. Fewer than 3,000 of these earlier burial mounds still exist. They suffered the same fate that the proposed law would inflict on the few remaining mounds: A property owner would be allowed to excavate and build over these grave sites for “development” purposes.

Following protests in January by hundreds of Native Americans at the Capitol rotunda in Madison, our state legislature recently backed down on this attempt to degrade sacred land for the sake of profit. Local demonstrations of solidarity for preservation of burial mounds, such as those at Lake Park in Milwaukee and elsewhere, reinforced these protests.

A number of “property rights” measures have been proposed for Wisconsin, from wetlands to historic architecture – laws that would restrict local authority to protect and conserve our environment and to preserve our common home. More and more, we realize the importance of coming together and making our voices heard.

Take a hike to welcome Spring

You can introduce yourself to Spring with a five-mile hike through the beautiful Scuppernong area of the Southern Unit of the Kettle Moraine State Forest on Saturday, April 30. As we hike, we will observe and learn about seasonal changes occurring in the forest.

Date: Saturday, April 30.

Time: 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Distance: 5 miles

Location: Highway 67 outside Eagle, WI, in the Southern Unit of the Kettle Moraine State Forest

Leader: Tom Wetzels. More information and RSVP at twetzels001@wi.rr.com.

Food dollars make a difference

By Anne Steinberg

“...if we are serious about changing the climate, we need to get serious about changing agriculture.” Michael Pollan (Ecowatch: It’s Time to Choose Climate-Friendly Food)

Although energy production is America’s top source of greenhouse gas emissions, our food system is No. 2. According to Pollan, industrial agriculture, concentrated livestock and processed food account for one-third of the total emissions causing climate change.

Factory farms carry a heavy carbon foot-print sending produce and meat cross-country. In addition, their pesticides, herbicides and fertilizer run-off damage our soil and water, as well as diminish our health.

Buying directly from small, local farmers helps create a more sustainable food system while reducing our carbon food print. We’re conserving resources when our food doesn’t have to travel far, and when organic veggies and pastured animals use less water and petroleum-based chemicals than factory farms.

Sustainable farming promotes carbon sequestration in the soil, as opposed to intensive cropping practices. So when we support farmers who take care of the soil, we can also help reverse climate change.

Free CSA open house set

By Anne Steinberg

GWG members will get an opportunity to talk with local farmers and learn about their Community Supported Agriculture subscription options at the Urban Ecology Center’s Local Farmer Open House Saturday, March 12 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Milwaukee’s Riverside Park. The event is free and open to the public.

You can sign up for local deliveries, buy lunch, visit the Resource Table and take a short workshop. Workshops are CSA Basics at 11:30 or 1:30, and Cooking from your CSA Box at 12 or 12:45.

Meeting will explore oil train risks

The League of Women Voters of Milwaukee County invites you to attend an informational meeting on “**A Citizens’ Right to Know: Oil Train Risks**” on Saturday, March 12 from 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at the UW-Milwaukee’s School of Freshwater Sciences, 600 E. Greenfield Ave. in Milwaukee.

Oil trains carrying crude oil, with as many as 100 cars at 30,000 gallons per car, pass through Milwaukee County several times a week over aging infrastructure. What are the risks of derailment, spills or fire?

Recent derailments in Watertown, WI and Galena, IL raise questions about a similar event happening here. How adequate is the infrastructure? How well is it maintained? How well prepared are we to respond to a derailment, spill or fire? These are some of the questions to be addressed at this meeting. Speakers include Eric Hansen and Brian Chiu of CARS and Wauwatosa Fire Chief Rob Ugaste.



A box of organic vegetables from a local Community Supported Agriculture farm is healthy for both the consumer and the environment.

Now is a good time to join a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farm. Purchase a share in a CSA and you’ll get a box of fresh chemical-free produce each week (or every other week) from around June to November. Shares come in different sizes, and many farms offer extras such as eggs and meat as well as flexible payment plans.

Participating in CSA’s helps to shift agriculture toward economically and environmentally sound farming and strengthens the century-old bonds between the community and the farmer.

Want to do more? Consider helping to start a Workplace CSA through your employer’s wellness or health program so you and others can pick up your CSA boxes right at work. Contact Jamie Ferschinger at Urban Ecology Center (jferschinger@urbaneecologycenter.org). She can put you in touch with volunteers to help you and your employer determine if a Workplace CSA is a good fit.

Co-sponsors include Sierra Club Great Waters Group, Milwaukee Riverkeeper, Citizens Allied for Rail Safety-MKE (CARS-MKE), United Community Center, Milwaukee Environmental Consortium and Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters.

Paddlers explore river setting

Canoe enthusiasts are invited to join the Sierra Club and the Friends of Lincoln Park as we visit areas affected by the removal of contaminated river sediment and learn about the shoreline restoration of native plants. We'll also tour the habitat of resident beavers and learn how they contribute to wetland diversity.

Paddlers need to bring their own boats, and PFDs are required. Mention in your RSVP if you have a spare seat in your boat. Water shoes or tall boots are recommended. Some exiting and re-entry of boats may be required, depending on water levels. A shoreline bring-your-own lunch will be held at noon, with the paddle to begin at 1 p.m.

Date: Sunday, May 8.

Time: 12 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Location: Milwaukee River Parkway, just north of Hampton Ave. and just north of the first bridge.

Leader: Friends of Lincoln Park. RSVPs are encouraged at David@thomerwald.net.

Bikers tour glacial trail

Come join us in welcoming summer as we bike the piney woods between Manitowish Waters and Boulder Junction on June 17-18.

As we ride the new Heart of Vilas County Bike Trail through the Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest, we'll be stopping often along the way to learn first-hand about the effects of the last glacier that created one of the most densely packed areas of freshwater lakes in the world.

On Saturday we will bike 10 miles into Boulder Junction where we'll also learn how smart environmental planning led to a village praised for its efforts to promote its natural north woods. On Sunday morning we will bike seven miles into Manitowish Waters through more glaciated areas.

Bring a dish to pass for our potluck Saturday night at Big Lake Campground right on the trail. Don't forget your swimsuit. Moderate physical ability will be required. Call Ed Anderson (414-520-2751) to make your camping reservations.

Volunteer Leadership Council (VLC) Contact List

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Dan Buckler, Outings Chair & Secretary 330-261-2088

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The sun setting through the pines at Oak Island is just one of the gorgeous views awaiting Sierrans who will commemorate the centennial of our National Park Service in mid-July.

Sierrans to celebrate Park Service milestone

Pristine beaches and miles of wooded hiking trails await Sierrans who will commemorate the centennial of our National Park Service on the Apostle Islands in mid-July.

Outings include a choice of a two-night stay on Stockton Island, a three-night stay on Oak Island, or all five nights. Transportation is available by public ferryboat, or you can kayak on your own.

Enjoy Ranger-guided presentations and campfires with island stories. Learn about the natural and cultural history of the area. An optional sea kayak day trip to the mainland sea caves is also available the Saturday after the return from Oak Island, weather permitting.

Dates

Sunday July 17 – Two nights at Stockton Island, Quarry Bay.

Tuesday July 19 – Three nights on Oak Island, 1.5 mile backpack to campsite.

Friday July 22 -- Evening boat returns to Bayfield, Wis.

Saturday July 23 -- Optional sea kayak day trip.

Cost: There is no fee or charge for this outing. However, there are direct shared costs of campsite reservations, boat fare and food. Estimated costs are: Stockton: \$125; Oak: \$150; both: \$250. Deposit \$50.

Limit: 16 people.

Contact Group leader David Thomas 414-344-1044, thomasdp@thomerwald.net to apply or for more information.



Thank you to everyone who contributed through workplace giving to the Sierra Club Foundation and Community Shares of Greater Milwaukee.

Monarchs destined for endangered list?

By Dianne Dagen
Conservation Chair

The monarch butterfly, once common across the United States, could soon end up on the Endangered Species List.

In response to a legal petition filed by the Center for Biological Diversity and other advocacy groups, including the Center for Food Safety, the US Fish and Wildlife Service agreed in 2015 to study whether monarchs deserve the federal environmental protections. Their decision is expected this year.

By some estimates the monarch butterfly population has declined by 90 percent over the past two decades, from about 1 billion butterflies in the mid-1990s to just 35 million in 2013. Scientists supporting the petition say the butterfly's

Come to the fundraiser

We're on our way to bringing back the monarch butterfly migration to Milwaukee County, and you can support that effort by coming to the Monarch Trail's annual fundraiser, April 20 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at Bridgetowne Gallery, 7734 Harwood Ave in Wauwatosa. More community involvement events will be announced in our next newsletter.

Last summer about 2,900 milkweed plugs were planted at the County Grounds monarch habitat. Thank you, volunteers and Eagle Scouts. With construction work at Innovation Park nearing completion, the Monarch Trail loop can now be walked full circle through the oak woods, north prairie, monarch glen, north berm and back to the trailhead.

GWG, UEC to collaborate

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will host an Earth Day of Service at UEC's Washington Park Branch. Throughout the morning starting at 9 a.m., members are invited to take part in work crews for a variety of service projects in the park, such as weeding and planting trees and shrubs. Meanwhile, inside the UEC building, environmental organizations will be showcasing their work and leading educational demonstrations from bee-keeping to repairing your bike. Also on display will be entrants in our urban wilderness expression contest.

At noon all of the service work will be complete, and guests will be treated to a hard-earned lunch and a short program in celebration of our urban wilderness. During the program, winning entrants from the contest will be announced and their work performed. Venice Williams, the director of Alice's Garden Urban Farm, will close our Earth Day celebration with wise and inspiring words.

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decline is linked to a rise in genetically engineered crops. Many of these crops are altered to be resistant to Monsanto's Roundup herbicide, which kills milkweed (*Asclepias*), the monarch caterpillar's only source of food.

The herbicide is so successful that milkweed plants have virtually disappeared in Midwestern corn and soybean fields, and monarch butterflies have effectively lost a Texas-size chunk of their habitat, according to the petition. Any eventual listing could bring more conservation of the butterfly's habitat.

Climate change may also be a factor in decreased migrations. Colder, wetter winters could be lethal to these creatures, and hotter, drier summers could shift suitable habitats north.

Earth Day – Celebrating Our Urban Wilderness

Saturday April 23 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Urban Ecology Center – Washington Park
1859 N. 40th Street, Milwaukee, WI 53208
Enter on the east side of the park on N. 40th St.

9 a.m. – service projects begin

10 a.m. - 1 p.m. – exhibitions and demonstrations by area organizations

12 p.m. – lunch is served

12:15 p.m. – Urban Wilderness program

Visit www.urbanecologycenter.org for more information!

Contestants pick favorites

"What is your favorite local greenspace or park, and why?"
At this year's Earth Day celebration we will be sponsoring a contest for people of all ages to artistically answer this question.

We encourage all people from the Great Waters Group area (Milwaukee, Waukesha, Ozaukee and Washington counties) to answer this question in words, artwork, video, song or dance. Prizes will be awarded to all age groups (12 and under, 13-17, and 18+), with the winners announced at the April 23 Earth Day festivities at the Urban Ecology Center's Washington Park branch.

Entrants will display their work in the auditorium, and winners are asked to perform or exhibit their work onstage. For contest details, please visit www.urbanecologycenter.org. Contact UECurbanwilderness@gmail.com with any questions or to submit your work. The entry deadline is 11:59 p.m. on April 15.



Protect America's Environment for Our Families, For Our Future

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Spring Programs

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Join us before the talk for an **Irish Potluck**. Please bring a dish to share. Baked potatoes will be provided. Toppings welcomed. Reservations not needed, but contacting Chris Zapf at zapfchristine@sbcglobal.net or 414-429-8069) four days prior helps us plan the food.

No Mayfair Program for April

See you at our **Earth Day of Service Celebration**
Saturday, April 23, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Washington Park UEC

What's the Buzz? Bees and Bee-Keeping Revealed

Monday, May 16, 7p.m.

What's happening to the bees, and why does it matter? Bees play an important role in our food systems. Discover who's inside the hive and how bees are managed for pollination and honey. Learn of the dance they do to find nectar. This sweet program by Charlie Koenen of Beepods and Community Supported Pollination will keep you buzzing. See Beepods.com.

Find us –

The GWG holds its monthly programs at Mayfair Mall. They are held the third Monday of most months in the Community Room on the lower level, Room G110. The room is located in the Garden Suites East area, entered most directly from the covered parking area on the east side of the mall.

Young Scientists offer sweet deal

Easy as pie, Young Scientists from Urban Ecology Center's Washington Park and community volunteers have been coming together each summer and winter since 2010 to make pies filled with fruit harvested from neighborhood fruit trees and bushes and other sources. The pies are then served to participants at the summer and winter festivals. It's a grassroots movement and creative effort that combines nature's bounty and pie making.

Here's the recipe for building a delicious sense of community. Young Scientist members are mentored with volunteers a few

days before each festival to make 60 pie crusts (30 tops and bottoms). Then they return the day before the festival to make the fruit filling and top the pies with cut-out designs and lattice. They then serve the festival pies and enjoy the fruits of their labor. Young Scientists learn the art and science of pie making as well as inter-generational community building.

If you'd like to join the Community Pies volunteers, picking/donating fruit or making/baking and serving pies at Washington Park, contact David Glenn at majsweetie@gmail.com or Janine Arseneau at janinea@execpc.com.