

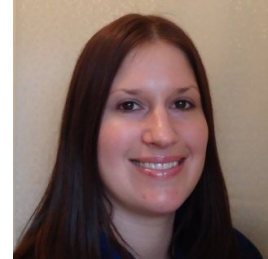
URBANWATERS

A Partnership for Restoring Urban Waterways and Revitalizing Communities

Meet the New Ambassador

Jen Birchfield to Lead Northwest Indiana Urban Waters Partnership

We are thrilled that Jen Birchfield has agreed to be the new Coordinator (aka Ambassador) for the Northwest Indiana Urban Waters Partnership starting in March. Many of our partners know Jen from her years as Water Program Director at Save The Dunes Conservation Fund. Since 2013, Jen has been the Grants Director at Dunes Learning Center.



Above: Jen Birchfield

Please help us extend a warm welcome to Jen. We look forward to having her at the helm of the partnership.

Tree Planting

New Program Will Provide Free Trees to NWI Communities

A new public-private partnership of industries and government agencies will start offering free trees to northwest Indiana communities this spring. The goal of the CommuniTree program is to promote native tree planting and after-planting care and maintenance.

One challenge for tree planting initiatives is keeping the trees alive and healthy while they get established and start to grow in their new location. To address this, CommuniTree will provide trees and tree care workshops. Planting partners commit upfront to watering the trees as needed for 3 years.



Above: CommuniTree logo.

The online application to request trees will be available soon. CommuniTree is inviting participation from new funders and planting partners. Contact [Joe Exl](#) for more information.

Opportunity to Contribute

Coastal Program Seeks Stakeholder Representatives for Advisory Board

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources Lake Michigan Coastal Program seeks nominations for all [Voting Board Members](#) to the Coastal Advisory Board. Appointments are for two years beginning with the April 19, 2017 meeting and running through February 2019. Nominees must work or reside in the Coastal Program area. Click [here](#) to review information about Board member duties and responsibilities before submitting a nomination. **Nominations are due March 3.**



Above: Lake Michigan Coastal Program logo.

Host An Urban Forestry Intern -- Or Apply for an Urban Forestry Internship

The Society of Municipal Arborists (SMA) has a special program to match communities with urban forestry interns -- and SMA and the U.S. Forest Service pick up the bill. Municipalities host students for 10 weeks during the summer or they may apply for an intern to help with a specific project where the hours are determined by the project needs. Students receive \$15/hour, a housing stipend of \$1,200, and registration and \$300 travel scholarship to attend the Fall 2017 Annual SMA Conference in Tulsa, OK.



Above: An urban forestry intern

Note that eligibility is limited to communities that have a municipal arborist who is an SMA member. Deadline is March 1 for summer internships and intern applicants. There is a rolling series of deadlines for project-based internships. [Learn More](#)

Items of Interest

Leveraging Resources for Brownfields Revitalization: Meet the Funders

Informational Webinar

Learn about redevelopment resources available from the National Park Service, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the National Endowment for the Arts to leverage brownfield funding. The webinar will also feature a community that has successfully used grants, loans and other support from these agencies for its revitalization efforts.

February 28 at noon CST

[>More Information<](#)

Chicago Wilderness Accepting Nominations for Force of Nature Awards

Opportunity for Recognition

Chicago Wilderness is looking to celebrate individuals, municipalities, agencies and organizations doing outstanding work across our region. The Force of Nature Awards will bring recognition to conservation, restoration, advocacy, and/or educational activities that are inspirational examples for others.

Nominations Due February 28

[>More Information<](#)

Free Tree Tag Kits from Morton Arboretum

Outreach and Education Materials

These informational tree tags are designed to be hung on highly visible trees in public spaces such as schoolyards, parks and downtown. To avoid the small shipping fee, contact [Cherie Fisher](#) by March 17 and she will pick up tree tags kits for your municipality or organization.

[>More Information<](#)

Let Them Climb Trees! The decline of play outdoors and the rise of sensory issues

Free Webinar

Using the same philosophy that lies at the heart of her popular TimberNook program, Angela Hanscom offers several strategies to help children thrive in outdoor environments using a therapeutic approach to nature play.

Wednesday, March 8 at noon CST

[>More Information<](#)

Trail Creek Watershed Partnership to Create Project List

Smart Growth Fixes for Climate Adaptation and Resilience

Meeting

The Trail Creek Watershed Partnership will create a comprehensive list of needed projects along Trail Creek at the March meeting. All stakeholders are welcome and are encouraged to attend in order to add their project ideas to the list.

Meeting Details: March 8 at 10 am, LaPorte County Convention and Visitor Center at Marquette Mall

Contact [Shannon Eason](#) for more information

Report and Technical Advice

USEPA's new publication, Smart Growth Fixes for Climate Adaptation and Resilience: Changing Land Use and Building Codes to Prepare for Climate Change, can help local governments find strategies to prepare for climate change impacts while achieving other environmental, economic, health, and social benefits.

[>Read the Report<](#)

Funding Opportunities

Coastal Resilience Grants, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

The NOAA Coastal Resilience Grants Program will support two categories of activities: 1) Strengthening Coastal Communities; or 2) Habitat Restoration.

Applications due March 15
Funding Amounts: \$200,000 - \$1,000,000

[>More Information<](#)

Grants to Promote Farmers Markets and Local Food

The USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service has \$27 million to fund innovative projects that increase consumption of, and access to, locally and regionally produced agricultural products.

Applications due March 27

[>More Information<](#)

USEPA Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act

The program will make up to \$1 billion in credit assistance loans available for large infrastructure projects such as drinking water and wastewater treatment, improved energy efficiency, and drought mitigation. Eligible applicants include state, local, and tribal governments.

Letters of Interest due April 10

[>More Information<](#)

NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Program

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will award up to \$252 million dollars to locally driven, public-private partnerships that improve the nation's water quality, combat drought, enhance soil health, support wildlife habitat and protect agricultural viability.

Pre-applications due April 21

[> More Information<](#)

Patagonia Environmental Grants

This grant supports small, grassroots, activist organizations with provocative direct-action agendas, working on multi-pronged campaigns to preserve and protect the environment. Efforts

National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program

This program provides grants of up to \$1 million to coastal and Great Lakes states, as well as U.S. territories to protect, restore and enhance coastal

should be quantifiable, with specific goals, objectives and action plans.

Applications due April 30
Typical Grants are \$2,500 - \$15,000

> [More Information](#)<

wetland ecosystems and associated uplands.

Applications due June 30

> [More Information](#)<

Next Urban Waters Meeting

Thursday, April 6, 9 a.m.

Joint meeting with the NIRPC Environmental Management Policy Committee
Location: Lake Michigan Room, NIRPC, 6100 Southport Road Portage, IN 46368-6409

[Click here](#) for draft minutes of the January 29 Urban Waters Partnership Meeting

The Northwest Indiana Urban Waters Partnership focuses on the Lake Michigan watershed in Lake, LaPorte and Porter Counties, Indiana.

Urban Waters works to connect urban communities, particularly those that are overburdened or economically distressed, with their waterways by improving coordination among federal agencies and state and local partners. The goals are to improve the Nation's water systems and to promote their economic, environmental and social benefits.