

Wildlife Corridor Growth Through Urban Greenspace Outreach

2023 Annual Volunteer Report



CITY OF
BLOOMINGTON
PARKS AND RECREATION



Urban Greenspace

Urban Greenspace describes the space we live by, play in, and work around throughout our lives. It's also the place where species biodiversity can be the strongest or can be struggling the most.

'Urban Greenspace' is also the name of the team that cares for the vegetation alongside volunteers in our city parks.



Historic community-legacy-building-involvement continues to take place every week and throughout the year. This commitment builds on thoughtful planning and action over several years.

Urban Greenspace

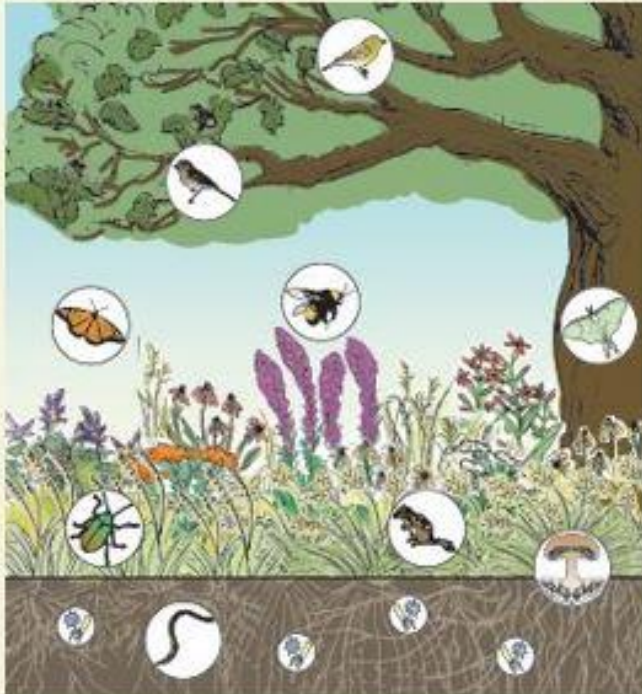
- The Urban Greenspace team works year-round with volunteers to ensure urban greenspaces and native species are thriving
- We educate volunteers about invasive plants and the harm they cause our ecosystem
- We unite those interested in responsible land management practices through maintenance of natural spaces and public education
- We promote land stewardship, physical fitness, and community

4,198 volunteer hours in 2023



Volunteers learn that the spread of invasive species creates an almost sterile environment above and below the ground. We can explain this by showing side by side images to illustrate the outcome and why we care about managing vegetation in urban greenspace.

Artwork by Mary Welz



Native plants

Callery Pear



Invasive plants

Invasive species can impact available food sources for wildlife, their lifecycle, our food source, soil erosion, water quality, social and economic values, and our future sustainability and resilience to climate change.

Burning bush

Purple wintercreeper

Urban Greenspace

Through community outreach we're able to meet volunteers who choose to join us at **Weed Wrangles** or choose to **Adopt a Greenspace**. Each person receives training and instruction on proper identification and removal techniques. All necessary tools, equipment, and safety gear are provided.

Our 2023 team included 45 Adopt a Greenspace Volunteers



Weed Wrangles are organised hands-on events to remove invasive species to allow native species to thrive. At the end of each event we clean our boots to prevent the spread of invasive seeds from one location to the next. It's part of our daily habit!





CITY OF BLOOMINGTON

PARKS AND RECREATION



Through the **Adopt a Greenspace** program volunteers become active stewards of their greenspace. Various parcels of land are available for adoption and are customizable by request. Adopting individuals/groups are encouraged to select a parcel of land that is of personal interest or value to them.

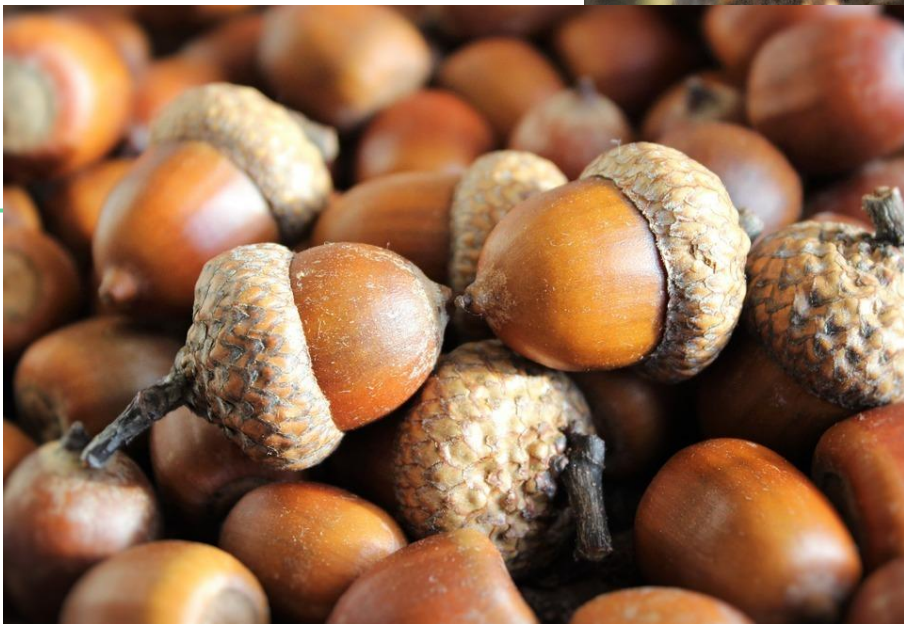
Jenni and Liza named their spot “Bunting Burrow” for all the indigo buntings that are present!

Urban Greenspace

Acorn/seed collecting and planting

Together we've created the **Winslow-Crestmont Wildlife Corridor project**.

Spanning from Crestmont Park to Winslow Woods the corridor aims to link tree canopy from forests north of the city through to the forests in the south. Keeping this corridor stable and robust enables birds, insects, and other wildlife to navigate with a greater degree of sustainability throughout their life cycles and beyond to new generations.



The **Winslow-Crestmont Wildlife Corridor Project** builds upon, and puts into action, the city's *Climate Action Plan*, the Environmental Commission's *Bloomington Habitat Connectivity plan*, and the *Parks and Recreation Department's Master Plan*.

Collaborating with partners, working with local experts, and growing friendships makes a wildlife corridor project possible.

Programs, like **Adopt a Greenspace** and **Weed Wrangle** events, create a framework for positive hands-on action.



Habitat Zones

- Dense
- Good Canopy
- Moderate
- Stressed
- Sparse Canopy

Winslow-Crestmont Wildlife-Corridor area

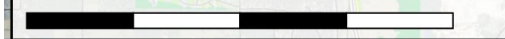
This corridor aims to connect existing greenspace throughout our city by increasing native habitat in public greenspace and privately owned land.

Crestmont Park

Winslow Woods and Sports Complex



0 0.5 1 1.5 2 mi



To enhance the wildlife corridor, we collect native seeds from city greenspaces to restore biodiversity in other areas.

Volunteers learn the importance of local genotypes, site conditions, and preparation.



Tools and Seeds

Partnering with **Adopt a Greenspace** volunteers like Ray Major from *Trees from Seed*, we are direct-planting seeds to increase biodiverse understory and tree canopy in urban greenspace areas.

These techniques also apply to herbaceous perennials, grasses and trees.

You can contribute to the wildlife corridor by doing similar work in your yard, school, place of worship, business and commercial properties.



Volunteers collect and direct-sow acorns and seeds into **no-mow zones**.

No-mow zones were once part of the seasonal mowing cycle. **No-mow zones** reduce our carbon footprint and provide more insects and more insect biodiversity. More insects means more pollinators and more food for birds for feeding their fledglings, and subsequently, supports the life cycle of other wildlife.





No-mow zone areas increase biodiversity, look beautiful, and provide many positive ecosystem services.

City of Bloomington Parks and Recreation Department has been working hard to restore the natural habitat in and around Winslow Sports Complex. As part of this goal, they have reduced or stopped mowing in several areas.

We found that the **No Mow Areas have more insect diversity, as well as higher abundance of insects, compared to the mowed areas of the park. The groups that are found in **No Mow Areas** include beneficial pollinators and predatory insects. This highlights the health of these habitat patches and the benefits that they provide for all of the area in and around Winslow Sports Complex. Our data supports the restoration of **No Mow Zones** and shows that they are making a difference here in Bloomington!***

Insect Orders Found in Each Area

No Mow	Mow
Orthopterans (Grasshoppers, crickets, katydids): Very abundant	Orthopterans (Grasshoppers, crickets, katydids): Very abundant
Diptera (Flies, particularly house flies and mosquitoes): Very abundant	Diptera (Flies, particularly house flies and mosquitoes): Very abundant
Hymenopterans (Bees, wasps, ants): Abundant	Hymenopterans (Bees, wasps, ants): Somewhat abundant
Hemipterans (True bugs, planthoppers): Somewhat abundant	Hemipterans (True bugs, planthoppers): Semi-rare
Lepidopterans (Butterflies, moths): Abundant	Coleopterans (Beetles): Somewhat abundant
Odonates (Dragonflies, damselflies): Semi-rare	
Neuropterans (Lacewings): Semi-rare	
Trichopterans (Caddisflies): Semi-rare	
Mantids (Praying mantises): Very rare	



Data Collected by: Paul Ginella, Bianca VanHooks, Fran Velez-Heredia, Matthew Deering during Indiana University Bloomington Entomology Summer 2023. Data Summary and landscape photo by Dr. Megan Murphy, Indiana University Department of Biology.

***2023 Indiana University Department of Biology study can be found here:**

[No Mow Zone Report](#)

We practice 'Leave the Leaves' in **no-mow zones**.

Leaves and woody debris provides winter protection for invertebrates and returns nutrients to the soil.



Urban Greenspace

The actions, initiated by establishing the Winslow-Crestmont Wildlife-Corridor, also secure our water quality and increase carbon sequestration. As well as reducing heat island effects, it helps us address low income - low tree canopy values.



Planting native trees, and ensuring the understory is biodiverse throughout a wildlife corridor, is essential for sustainability and for socio-economic equity.



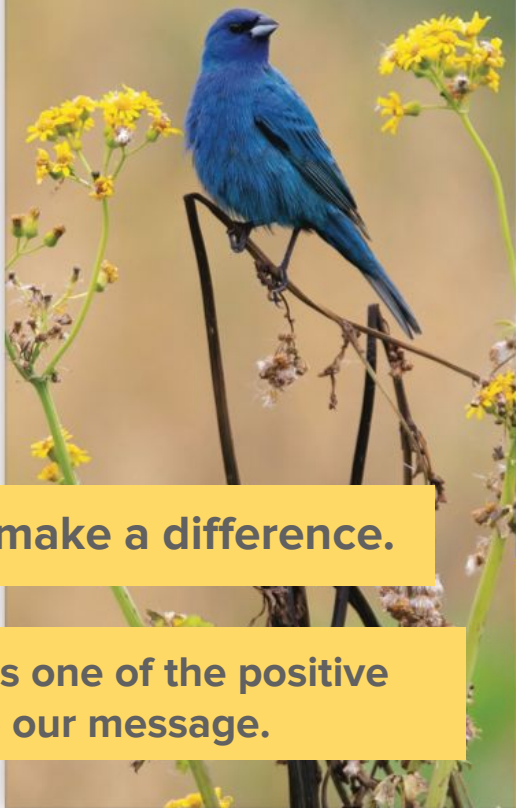
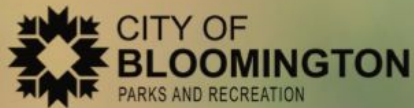
Urban Greenspace

These action steps ~
reducing invasive species,
growing native, and involving
volunteers ~ include meeting
and building relationships
with people who can make an
even greater impact on their
land:

- Neighborhoods
- Places of Worship
- Corporations
- Schools

**269 invasive plant control and native
habitat restoration events in 2023!**





We need your help to protect our park edges.

Our city parks provide vital habitat for 74 different bird species, including the indigo buntings, who love railroad corridors and forest edges; and screech owls and pileated woodpeckers, who rely on nesting cavities in dead and standing trees.

You can help keep our city parks a haven for birds and wildlife! When you are working in your yard:

- Mow only to the edge of your property boundary.
- Instead of using city greenspace for yard waste like leaves, grass clippings and brush, choose to compost them in a designated space in your yard, or use the City Sanitation yard waste system every other week.
- Instead of depositing trash, pet waste, and other unwanted items on city greenspace choose to recycle, donate or use City Sanitation weekly trash pick up.
- Control invasive plant species in your yard so they won't spread into our parks.

Bloomington Parks and Recreation's Urban Greenspace program has many different ways you can be involved in protecting vital park edges:

Your help can make a difference.

This postcard is one of the positive ways we share our message.

Indigo buntings breed in the ecotome between the forest and meadows. Our city parks are critical wildlife habitats and provide a haven for birds and other animals. Help us protect our park edges!

**Adopt-a-Greenspace,
Volunteer to help,
Education, and
Work Days!**

**Together we can do amazing things...
like grow a wildlife corridor!**



**Award Winning Volunteers
are part of our community.
They make us all successful.**

Urban Greenspace

We actively grow volunteer involvement

We keep adding friends

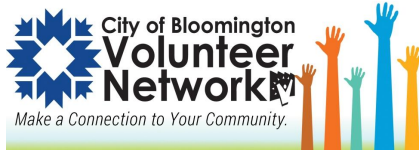
We keep having fun



Community partnerships keep growing



CITY OF BLOOMINGTON
PARKS AND RECREATION



Trees from Seed



O'NEILL
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS



Theta Chi Fraternity



Summary

- **Historic community-involvement helps us care for our environment**

We invite you to:

- **Make friends and participate in volunteer activities**
- **Seek out partners who can help you care for the environment**
- **Work with your local experts**
- **Uncover the Climate Action Plan, Habitat Connectivity Plan, and the Parks and Recreation Department's Master Plan in your community**
- **Grow wildlife corridors wherever possible**
- **Have patience**

You don't have to have do it all at once

You can make a difference



Contributors

Community Relations

Emily Buuck

Community Relations Coordinator
Volunteer Event Organizer
Volunteer Data

Julie Ramey

Community Relations Manager

**Special thanks to
all partners,
volunteers, and
staff participants in
our 2023 volunteer
events!**

Urban Greenspace

Jolie Blevins

UGS Data Coordinator
Volunteer events aid

Gillian Field

UGS Outreach Coordinator
Volunteer Event Organizer

Kelley Scholfield

UGS Outreach Coordinator
Volunteer events aid

Emily Smitheram

UGS Data Coordinator
Volunteer events aid

Joanna Sparks

UGS Manager
Volunteer Event Organizer



Urban Greenspace

Please contact *Urban Greenspace Outreach Coordinator* Gillian Field with your interest in the *Winslow-Crestmont Wildlife-Corridor Project*. We invite you to become an Adopt-a-Greenspace and Weed Wrangle volunteer, and to explore neighborhood or organization partnerships with us.

gillian.field@bloomington.in.gov

Cell phone: 812 327- 3708

www.bloomington.in.gov/parks/parks/adopt-a-greenspace

Thank you for caring



**CITY OF
BLOOMINGTON**
PARKS AND RECREATION

