



Environmental Service Learning

Spring 2026



Center for Earth and Environmental Science



INDIANAPOLIS SCHOOL OF SCIENCE

Department of Earth & Environmental Sciences

Spring 2026 stewardship will focus on:

community science

invasive species removal

environmental clean up

Service Learning Projects



Spring 2026

Bird Watching for Community Science

The Great Backyard Bird Count

Purpose

GBBC (initiated in 1998) is a long term global project that provides a snapshot of bird diversity and abundance in mid February.

Community science projects increase “eyes on the ground” for data observation.

People of all skill levels can take part.

Birding is often the “gateway drug” to an appreciation of the diversity of the natural world – and – participation in community science projects.

Birds are, metaphorically speaking, the canaries in the coal mine for many environmental issues.

This is because birds are large, relatively obvious, and therefore more easily studied.

No birding skills needed - we train you for Indiana winter bird ID!

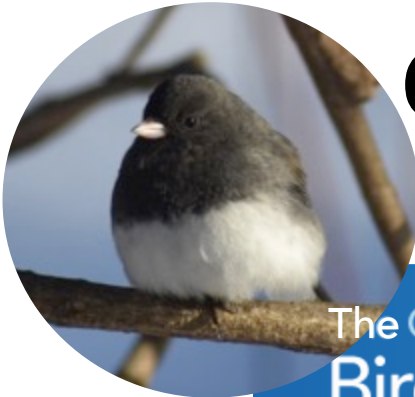


charismatic megafauna

Birds hold a middle position in most food webs: they feed on insects, fruits, and grains – lower level components of food webs.

Their dependence on insects to feed their young during the breeding season is particularly important.

Environmental impacts affecting these lower-level components may be more readily observed/assessed through their impacts on birds.



Citizen Science: GBBC



LOCATION: Holliday Park
Nature Center



Powered by eBird



Home About the GBBC Get Started Submit Observations Explore Data My eBird



GBBC is always President's Day weekend

Instructor APPROVAL

If your instructor wants you to do a water-quality related project, do not select GBBC.

2026 Great Backyard Bird Count is February 13-16

Bird watchers of all ages count birds to create a real-time snapshot of where birds are.

Count birds anytime, anywhere, with eBird »



This project is indoors (but we may go outside, weather permitting).

No birding skills needed - we train you for Indiana winter bird ID!



Project 1 & 2

February 13 (Friday)

Project 3 & 4

February 14 (Saturday)

There is a morning and afternoon project each day

morning project is 9:30 AM – 12:30 PM
afternoon project is 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

There is no back-up date: we do this project rain or shine.



Citizen Science: GBBC

LOCATION: [Holliday Park Nature Center](#)

Instructor APPROVAL
needed



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Friday Projects

Project 1

February 13 (morning)
9:30 AM – 12:30 PM

Project 2

February 13 (afternoon)
1:00 PM – 4:00 PM



Just to reiterate the date/time of each event

Back-up Date: **NA**

Citizen Science: GBBC

We will use the wildlife observation room at the Holiday Park Nature Center.

Instructor APPROVAL needed



Powered by eBird



Saturday Projects

Project 3

February 14 (morning)

9:30 AM – 12:30 PM

Project 4

February 14 (afternoon)

1:00 PM – 4:00 PM



Do you have field glasses or a 35mm DSLR camera?

Bring them!

Back-up Date: **NA**

Invasive Species Removal

**Bush Honeysuckle –
it's everywhere!**

Invasive plants often have far-reaching impacts on the environments in which they become established.

Bush Honeysuckle has characteristics that make it particularly problematic due to the effects the shrub has on infiltration and water quality.

Infiltration is the movement of water deeper into the soil.



You will learn to identify it

. . . . loathe it

. and celebrate its removal!

Invasive Species Removal

Purpose

Removing invasive species helps address (remediate) the various negative impacts caused by the presence of the invasive species in the environment.

improve habitat

These are just a few of the negative impacts invasive species can have.

invasives replace native species

invasives decrease biodiversity

invasives may not be a suitable food resource for insect herbivores

improve water quality

honeysuckle promotes sediment loading of waterways



All this green shrubbery is honeysuckle

See *Why we do these projects – invasives & trash removal* for an explanation.

Southeastway Park

LOCATION: southeast side of Indianapolis
5624 South Carroll Rd.

may show up on maps as
County Road 900 W

Bush honeysuckle leaves out very early!

Southeastway Park is the home of **Bug Fest** – an annual celebration of all things insect!

Bug Fest takes place the last Sunday of August.



Invasive Species Removal

This is what bush honeysuckle looks like in the fall when it fruits.

Project 5

March 27 (Friday)

10:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Project 6

March 28 (Saturday)

10:00 AM - 1:00 PM

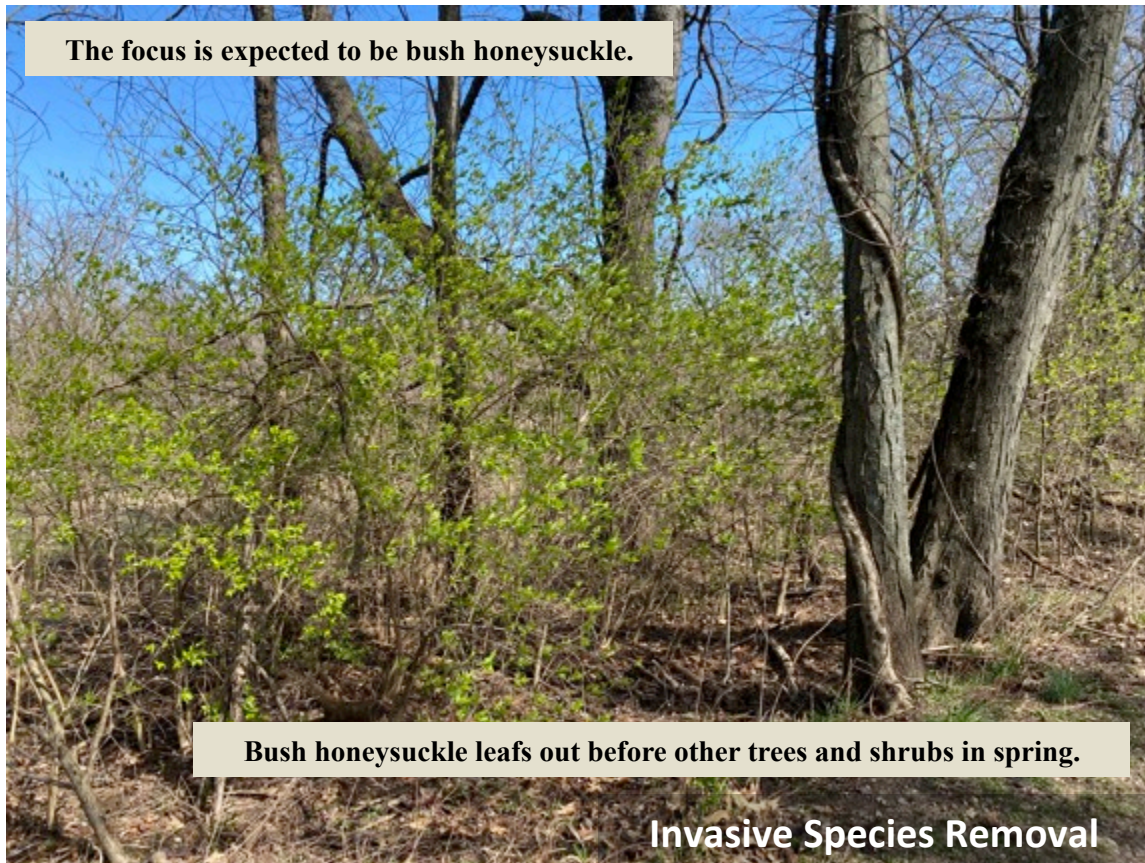
Backup Date: Sunday, March 29

10:00 AM – 1:00 PM



Northwestway Park

The focus is expected to be bush honeysuckle.



Bush honeysuckle leaves out before other trees and shrubs in spring.

Invasive Species Removal

LOCATION: north and west of Indianapolis, near Eagle Creek Park
5253 West 62nd Street

This is a new location for service learning.



Project 7

April 17 (Friday)

10:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Project 8

April 18 (Saturday)

10:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Backup Date: Sunday, April 19

10:00 AM - 1:00 PM



The White River floods regularly.

Projects close to campus.

New York Street Bridge

ARBOR

The ARBOR (an experimental forest) is located on the east bank of the White River, between New York Street and 10th Street.

When the White River floods, the ARBOR may be inundated.

Flooding deposits woody debris in the forest – and large amounts of trash.



March 2022 flood; view from the 10th Street Bridge.

Flood waters can also deposit seeds.

Sometimes the plants brought in are invasive species.

Garlic Mustard

flowering stage

rosette stage

If we have a colder winter/spring, the plant may still be in the rosette stage when we are working at the ARBOR.

Temperature and precipitation will influence the growth rate of garlic mustard.

If we have a warm winter/spring, the plant may be in flower by mid April.



ARBOR Trash Clean-up

The White River floods frequently.

With each flood event, trash is deposited in the floodplain.

We'll remove trash, thereby disrupting the land-to-river-to-ocean pathway it follows.

Purpose

return recyclables to the recycling stream

interrupt the land-to-ocean pathway of plastics

improve habitat

improve water quality

This project is convenient to campus: the ARBOR is on the west side of campus – it's the forest located along the eastern bank of the White River.



Wintercreeper



Collected trash will be sorted as recyclable or non-recyclable, and disposed of accordingly.

The ARBOR is a riparian forest on the east bank of the White River. The trees (initially just tiny twigs and small saplings) were planted during service learning events that took place in the fall of 2000.

“Riparian” simply means that the forest is located along a river or stream.



Lilly ARBOR



Trash Clean-up & Invasive Species Removal

All sorts of odd trash is found at the ARBOR.



LOCATION: Lilly ARBOR – Porto Alegre St. between 10th Street and New York Street bridges

Project 9

We will also remove wintercreeper, an invasive vine that creeps over the ground forming a dense ground-cover.

Friday, March 6

10:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Backup Date: TBD*

March 7 (Saturday) – or – March 8 (Sunday)

Wintercreeper

10:00 AM – 1:00 PM

*If a back-up date is need due to river flooding, we may need to shift to another week entirely in order to give the floodwaters time to recede.



Lilly ARBOR

LOCATION: Lilly ARBOR – Porto Alegre St.
between 10th Street and New York Street bridges



Invasive Species Removal

Project 10

Friday, April 10

10:00 AM – 1:00 PM

This project focuses on removing garlic mustard, an invasive herb.

*Again, if rescheduling is necessary due to flooding, we may need to shift to another week entirely while we wait for the floodwater to recede.

Backup Date: TBD*

April 11 (Saturday) – or – April 12 (Sunday)*

10:00 AM – 1:00 PM



Benefits of Environmental Service Learning:

What do you get out of it?

- Providing opportunities for *environmental stewardship* and *experiential learning*.
- Engaging in *dialog* about *environmental issues*.
- Introducing regional *natural areas*.
- Introducing *groups that maintain* these areas.
- Introducing issues to stimulate *changes in behavior* as well as *critical thinking* about **humanity's role** as an **agent of change**.
- *Restoring* and *improving* natural areas.
- *Mitigating* and *preventing* pollution.
- *Building* a sense of *community*.

CEES's Service Learning program provides opportunities for all of the above

. . . . and some projects also result in improved water quality – both locally and regionally!

Education & Community Service

Aside from the obvious faculty requirement or extra-credit bribe?



IMPROVE WATER QUALITY

And then there is the warm fuzzy feeling that comes from adulting.



Questions ?

Contact:

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Stay Connected!

Facebook: www.facebook.com/CEES.IUI

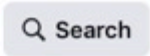


Instagram: CEES_IUI



**Center for Earth and Environmental Science at IU
Indianapolis**

897 likes • 955 followers



Service Learning photos are posted to our Face Book page!

Interesting environmental science, ecology & geology themed material is posted as well.



MUCH LEARNING

VERY SERVICE

SO WATER

The Doge is no longer considered funny – alas!

‘Tis not a vibe.

Its humor has ceased to be.

This is an ex-meme.



AMAZE

SUCH CLEAN

WOW