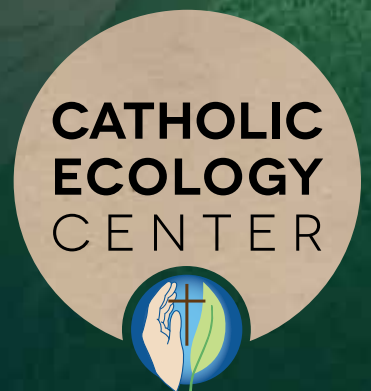




Introducing the home of the **CATHOLIC ECOLOGY CENTER**

Impact Report 2020





Wildlife Monitoring

A MESSAGE OF HOPE

Although COVID has created many challenges for all of us this year, God has still continued to bless Laudato Si' Project's ministry. Our outdoor and retreat programs seem to be more important than ever and we were thrilled to still offer a variety of engaging and faith-filled programs.

We are so excited to announce the new Catholic Ecology Center! Our amazing property, facilities and partnerships will create countless opportunities for our programs, connecting our faith with hands-on encounters with the natural world.

It is with sincere gratitude that I thank all of our donors, members, partners and volunteers.

Laudato Si' Mi' Signore. Praise Be to You My Lord,

Joe Meyer, Executive Director

CONNECTING TO CHRIST AND HIS CREATION



Owl Program

OUR IMPACT SINCE 2016

Connecting with over **4900** youth, families and adults

Serving through over **2265** volunteer hours of stewardship

Educating through over **325** hours of educational programs

Experiencing through over **150** hours of outdoor recreational outings



Monarch Tagging

**CATHOLIC
ECOLOGY
CENTER**



ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND

Laudato Si' Project is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that began in 2016 in response to Pope Francis' 2015 encyclical *Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home*.

MISSION

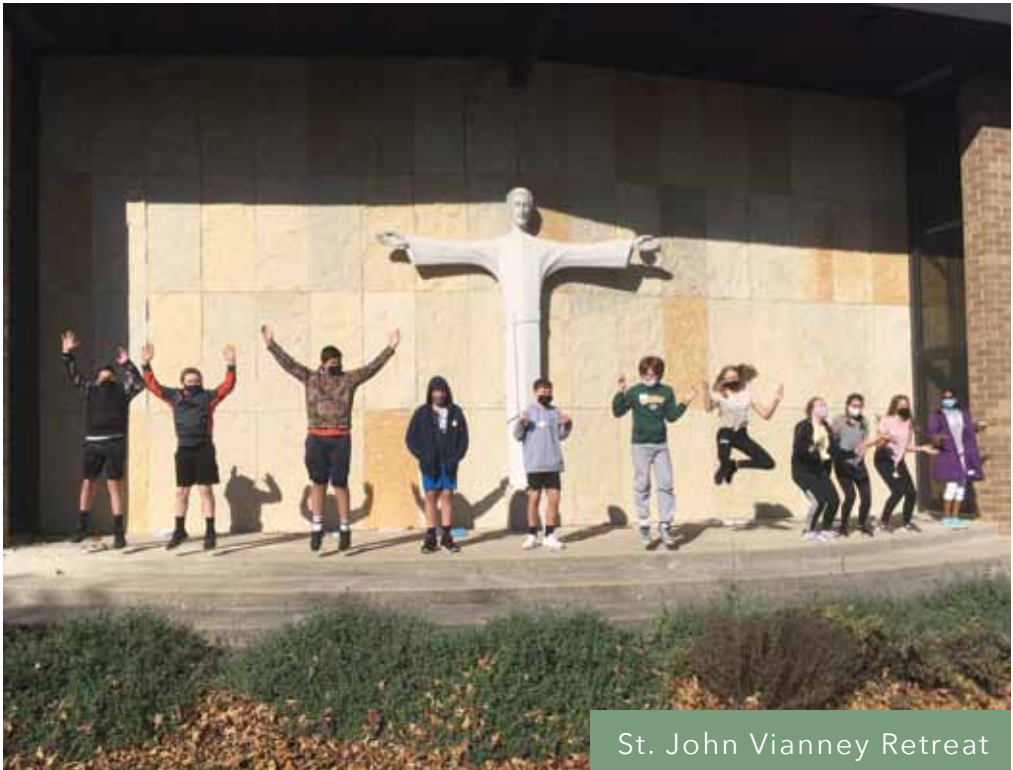
To restore humanity's connection to the natural world through education, stewardship and recreation. Deepening faith and fostering a stewardship ethic through hands-on connections with the natural world.

VISION

The Catholic Ecology Center seeks to provide unique encounters with God's handiwork in order to help people integrate their faith and everyday lives with a call to be stewards of creation. We work with people of all ages, with an emphasis on youth, families and underserved populations.

REJOICE ALWAYS.
PRAY WITHOUT CEASING.
IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES GIVE
THANKS, FOR THIS IS THE WILL OF
GOD FOR YOU IN CHRIST JESUS.

1THESSALONIANS 5:16-18



EDUCATION



OUR IMPACT IN 2020

60 hours of educational programs



PROGRAMS

We spread the Gospel message through hands-on programming focused on faith, ecology and our relationship with the world around us. We challenge people of all ages and backgrounds to live out their faith and grow deeper in their love for Christ, His Church and the world around them. We were thrilled to have such great attendance this year at our monarch butterfly events and owl release program.

RETREATS

Our unique programming integrates the truths of our faith with a love and care for our common home. We utilize the beautiful gifts of creation around us as a conduit to draw people deeper into faith and a greater respect for the gifts God has given us. Our service flows from a deep interior life and love for Christ. Within retreats, hands-on stewardship projects are a way we live out our call to care for creation and deepen our commitment to a life of virtue.

**THE EARTH WILL NOT CONTINUE
TO OFFER ITS HARVEST,
EXCEPT WITH
FAITHFUL STEWARDSHIP.**

POPE ST. JOHN PAUL II

OUR IMPACT IN 2020

320 hours of volunteer stewardship

3 prairie projects = **7.5** acres

25 hours of recreational outings



Preserve Hike

RECREATION

TIME IN NATURE IS RE-CREATIONAL

Especially in these challenging times, recreational outings for youth, adults and families are vitally important. This time in the natural world allows for opportunities to experience God and His creation. Time outside helps us quiet our minds and hearts so we can better live out the call God has for each one of us.



Trail Making



Oconomowoc River Conservancy



Schoofs Legacy Butterfly Garden

STEWARDSHIP

PROJECTS

Stewardship is a fun and tangible way to live our faith that is called into service.

Stewardship projects like woodland restoration, prairie plantings or trail creation are a great way to get students involved for service hours, Eagle Scout projects or as part of a retreat. These projects are also an avenue to involve adults and families and remind us that we are called to care for creation everyday.



Prairie Planting

Before: Spring 2019

After: Summer 2020



Fall Hike



Snowshoeing

**FOR FROM THE GREATNESS AND
THE BEAUTY OF CREATED THINGS
THEIR ORIGINAL AUTHOR,
BY ANALOGY, IS SEEN**

WISDOM 13:5



**CATHOLIC
ECOLOGY
CENTER**



The Catholic Ecology Center (CEC) is located at W1468 County Rd. NN, just 12 minutes west of Holy Hill near the town of Neosho. The CEC sits on a diverse and beautiful 59 acres that is part of a 225 acre preserve complex. As a former Girl Scout Camp, the land and facilities exemplify our mission of getting people of all ages out into nature and creating a place to encounter Christ through His creation. We acquired the property in early 2021 and it is waiting for you to visit and explore its wonders.



Rainbow Darter



Tadpole Wonder



Wildlife Monitoring



Lance-tipped Darner



Hiking



Nearly 2 Miles of the Rubicon River



Insect Collecting



St. Francis Hall

**LET ALL CREATION BEND
THE KNEE...TO THE LORD.**

FR. ROC O'CONNOR SJ

RAISE YOUR VOICES IN A CHORUS
OF PRAISE; BLESS THE LORD
FOR ALL HIS WORKS!

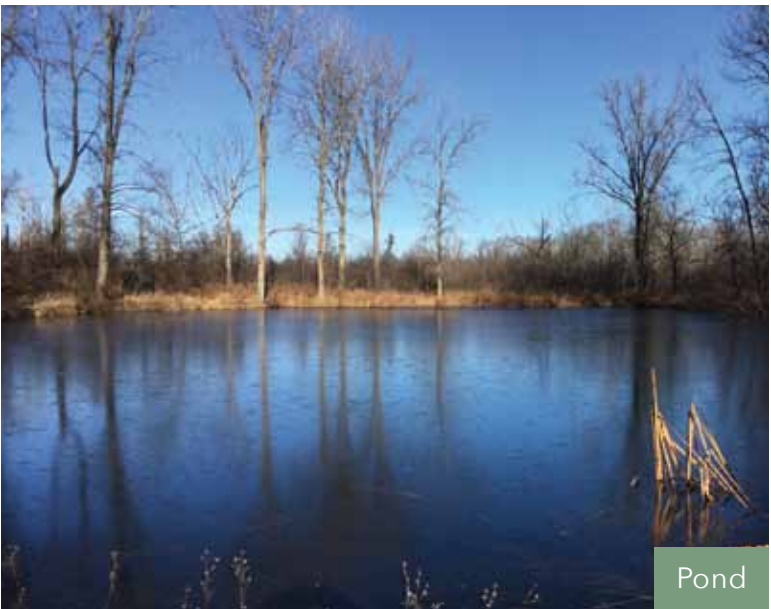
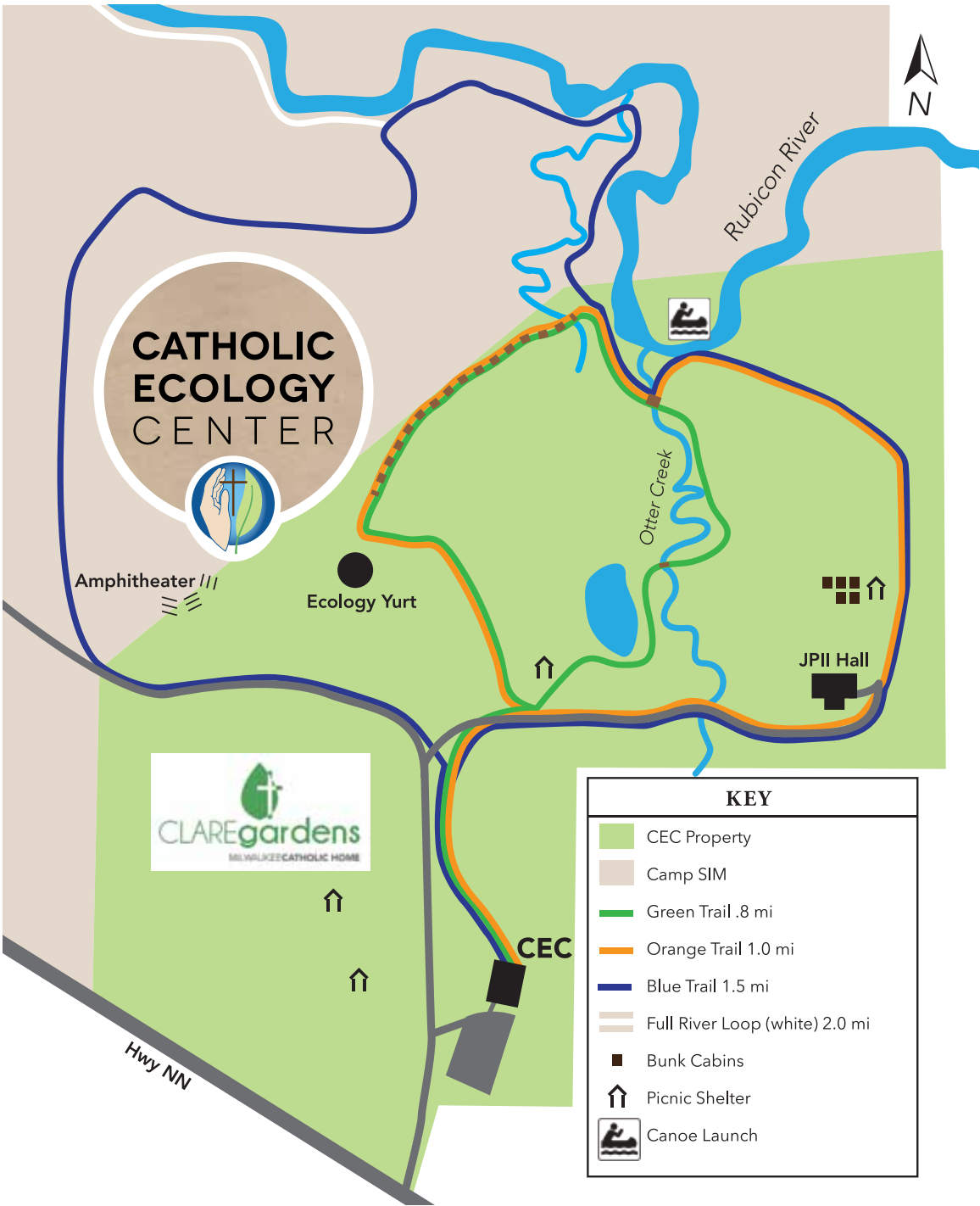
SIRACH 39:14



Picnic Shelter and Sleeper Cabins



Ecology Yurt



Pond



Boardwalk

Explore nearly 2 miles of the Rubicon River, .5 miles of creek and a ½ acre pond. 5.5 miles of hiking and cross country ski trails wind along the waterways and through the forests, meadows and wetlands. The land creates opportunities for canoeing, fishing and ecology programs.

Pray, relax and reflect along our beautiful trails, allowing you to hear the quiet of nature and the whisper of God. Enjoy the beautiful surroundings by using our 4 outdoor picnic shelters, 5 bunk cabins and various camping opportunities.

Learn in our large gathering spaces including the 1300 square foot St. Francis Hall and 2500 square foot JPII Hall. Utilize our indoor and outdoor classroom spaces including our Ecology Yurt, Amphitheatre, Clare Gardens Outdoor Classroom, Heaven’s Hideout Kids Loft and St. Kateri Classroom.

Serve through countless stewardship projects on the land. From restoration and trail projects to working at Clare Gardens, there is something for individuals of all ages and groups of all sizes.



PARTNERSHIPS



We are so very proud to announce our partnership with Clare Gardens at the Catholic Ecology Center. Clare Gardens, a ministry of Milwaukee Catholic Home, is an organic gardening and education ministry that grows produce for retirement communities including its new intergenerational community, Trinity Woods. Clare Gardens also works in collaboration with Riverwest Food Pantry. Dave Fulcher, executive director of Milwaukee Catholic Home, says they utilize the growth of wholesome, organic, nutritious food to not only fill the stomachs of local residents but to educate the public about our connection with the land.

Clare Gardens will be moving their organic gardens from its current home in Burlington to the Catholic Ecology Center beginning in 2021. At the Catholic Ecology Center, Clare Gardens will grow vegetables, orchard and perennial fruits like apples and raspberries, host bee hives and incorporate composting from food waste generated on-site. "What's so exciting about our new home at the Catholic Ecology Center is also the educational opportunities for teaching people of all ages about growing food and living sustainably," says Anna Metscher who is the farm manager at Clare Gardens.

Even beyond food education, the Catholic Ecology and Clare Gardens partnership allows for diverse and engaging programming for Milwaukee Catholic Home residents.



Camp SIM, a newly created camp for employees of Sussex IM, will own the land adjacent to the Catholic Ecology Center. This exciting partnership created the synergy that allowed the Catholic Ecology Center and Camp SIM to purchase the former Girl Scout camp and prevent it from being sold to development. Keith Everson, CEO of Sussex IM and supporter of the Catholic Ecology Center, says "Our partnership allows for the preservation, management and use for education the entirety of the property's 225 acres. I delight in knowing the Catholic Ecology Center has a home here."

Camp SIM will utilize their property as a place for company events, picnics and camping opportunities for employees. We are thrilled to be able to engage employees of Sussex IM in our ecology programs, stewardship service projects, vegetable gardening and recreational opportunities.



THANK YOU 2019-2020

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In Memory of Jeanette DeMers

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Adopt 'n Acre

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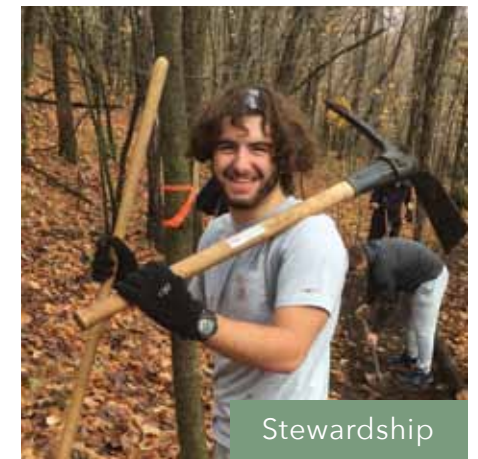
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Salamander Monitoring



Ecology Program



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PRAISE BE TO YOU MY LORD.**

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