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2020 4Q Newsletter October-December



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Green Business Directory Soft Launch

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Sustainable Stillwater MN's effort to kickstart not just a recovery, but a **GREEN recovery — the Greater Stillwater Area Green Business Directory — is online at GreenStillwater.org !**

The most ambitious project Sustainable Stillwater has ever launched is out of the starting gate, heading for a public debut in 2021. Do you know of local companies and organizations that meet or exceed standards for social and environmental responsibility? Send your suggestions to greenbiz@sustainablestillwatermn.org or better yet — tell the favorite businesses to apply directly at GreenStillwater.org

We chose only the best to partner with us -- GreenAmerica.org - a national certification nonprofit. It's free for businesses to apply -- if they meet our criteria, qualified businesses receive free publicity, social media promotion, awards, and a free profile in the directory! Did you know that more than 500 sustainability enthusiasts follow us on Instagram: [sustainablestillwatermn](#) - Facebook: [SustainableStillwaterMN](#) - Twitter: [@MNsustainable](#) - this newsletter, and/or our [website](#)? Directory members will be reaching them all.

Congratulations to the following businesses that have applied and been certified for awards:

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VistaTek/SelfEco (Gold)
Joseph's Restaurant (Silver)
Valley Outreach (Silver)
ArtReach St. Croix (Bronze)
First Presbyterian Church (Bronze)
FamilyMeans (Bronze)

*Companies must qualify to be in the Directory if they wish to become sponsors of the Green Business Directory and Awards. Our two sponsors, Lakeview Hospital and IPS-Solar, exceeded our highest green standards!

For applicants that fall short of meeting our criteria, there is no worry about having that information go public. Only with a company's permission and attainment of an award level will a business's report card be made public. Assistance and grants are available from our partner organizations to make improvements and try again. We urge all businesses to apply -- there is nothing to lose! It's a win-win situation for the environment and our community.

Support Us



Citizen Bike Advocacy Efforts City Now Working with Us

Sustainable Stillwater MN is dedicated to creating a healthier lifestyle for all and reducing our carbon footprint. Biking checks off both goals. The Lift Bridge Loop Trail has given us opportunities to improve our local biking amenities and the economy by encouraging all these bicyclists to visit downtown. A bike-friendly Stillwater is coming, thanks to our presentations to city officials and committees

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includes designated spaces for permanent bike racks, price quotes for rack purchases, and final implementation of plans with the city.

Education is also part of our effort, which includes promotion of bike etiquette on the trails and bike safety. We are collaborating with the Stillwater Police Department to align activities such as bicycle education, bike rodeos, communication, and enforcement of biking and trail rules. Articles our members have written on bike rules and safety have appeared in our monthly column in the Stillwater Gazette and the City of Stillwater's quarterly newsletter. The Bike-Friendly team is creating a draft of a city bicycle education plan that includes the training of certified cycling instructors and we are working with city schools to support the curriculum.

Join us! Contact rick@sustainablestillwatermn.org to be in the "loop."

Contact Rick Heidick



SSMN GreenStep Progress Report

One of our greatest accomplishments as a citizen's group was getting Stillwater to become a GreenStep City. **GreenStep is a state program** that provides a framework for making communities green and sustainable. Each month, the SSMN GreenStep Team, now led by Linda Countryman, meets with the city's GreenStep coordinator Graham Tate, to push for more progress. Here are some of the things SSMN and the City accomplished together in 2020!

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from solar installations on 3 city buildings.

- Living Streets: a Community Thread Connector Loop was started to connect riders to area housing, retail, businesses, and other destinations.
- The 2040 Comprehensive Plan placed Stillwater well on the way to high scoring in the areas of density planning, mixed-use development, and conservation of natural areas, especially in the Liberty and Legends communities.
- Best Practices for public and private tree planting and an Emerald Ash Borer management plan have been adopted.
- LEDs, reseeding/irrigation, a new river park, and a downtown connection to the Gateway Bike Trail are coming in 2021.
- Local Food: Many best-practice efforts are in place, such as the creation of an Ag Preservation District. Bee-keeping and chickens are allowed in most districts; the Saturday Farmer's Market is going strong; and a buy-local relationship now exists between Axdahl Farm and local grocery stores, restaurants, and distributors.
- Business synergies are happening with shared parking; a brewery has been reused as a hotel, and the local post office has installed a permeable parking lot to absorb rainwater.

Next, we are looking to get the city to adopt sustainable design practices that make our city safe and fun for pedestrians and bicyclists. Our Bike-Friendly Community team is working on that (article above).

Finally, we did a demonstration and Zoom conference with Graham Tait to invite the city to participate in our Green Business Directory. Green business development is another GreenStep that the city can achieve! Hopefully, we will hear something soon.

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Game On for BizRecycling

Washington County BizRecycling and MN WasteWise, Sustainable Stillwater MN Green Business partners, have a video and game online to test your knowledge of recycling in Washington County. Since the recyclability of various materials changes from time to time, it's important to stay current. I guarantee that their [recycling education video](#) will teach you something you didn't already know. Then check out their sorting game [Know What to Throw](#) to test your prowess!

Businesses and non-profits are finding how helpful scheduling a consultation with BizRecycling can be. They'll receive expert advice on how to improve their recycling efforts and save money in the process. Several of our Green Business Directory applicants have been pleasantly surprised that they could apply for a \$10,000 grant from BizRecycling to pay for everything from a few months of organic waste-hauling to a trash compactor or dishwasher.

-- Leslie Frick, Waste Reduction Enthusiast

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Don't Miss These Online Events

Have Lunch with a Scientist! <https://www.cedarcreek.umn.edu/lwas> "Lunch with a Scientist" programs are aimed at adults, and run from 11:30am to 1pm on the 2nd Tuesday of each month. Meet at the Lindeman Research and Discovery Center (2660 Fawn Lake Drive NE, East Bethel 55005), or watch online.

- October 13th: Small Mammals, Janine Mistrick
- November 10th: Dendrochronology, Daniel Griffin
- December 8th: Cedar Creek Food Webs, Eric Seabloom and Elizabeth Borer

Listen to Terry L. Root: Professor Emerita at Stanford University co-awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2007 with Vice President Al Gore will talk about climate change at this online Facebook Live event on Monday, October 12th at 6PM.

<https://www.facebook.com/events/1242509742759944/>

She says: "Much is changing on our planet, including earlier spring warming so flowers are blooming and birds are breeding earlier, species are also moving to cooler areas on land and in the oceans. Unless we soon slow the rapid warming, enumerable people will suffer due to heatwaves, storm surges, and spreading diseases. Additionally, hundreds of thousands of species—including species we rely upon—will face extinction. We must stop our fossil-fuel addiction to avoid such problems. Thankfully, there are many things that we can do, collectively and individually, to decrease the emissions of CO2. We just need the will to do it."

How to Raise a Shade Tree <https://www.stillwaterlibrary.org/how-to-raise-a-shade-tree-from-nursery-to-maturity>



Bird City Rescheduled to May 22, 2021

Third time will be the charm! A celebration to mark Stillwater as an Audubon Bird City has been rescheduled for Saturday, May 22, 2021, at Pioneer Park. Hopefully, the world will be in a better place, birds will be migrating; warblers will be here! Thank you to our volunteers for all your work and please keep your projects and ideas and materials in a safe place to put together next spring. Sheila Maybanks will reconvene the planning in February.



Cigarette Disposal Containers Still Available!

The SSMN cigarette container program has been in operation for over a year in downtown Stillwater, maintained by businesses and our volunteer Bob Barratt. There are less than a dozen left, so let us know if you can use one! Free containers are placed by Stillwater Public Works on poles near businesses that have agreed to adopt and empty them regularly. The maintenance of a container is very simple: just check it and empty it about every other week until you know how often it needs to be emptied -- the containers can hold a lot of cig butts and do not really need to be emptied very often.

We currently have approximately 31 containers in place downtown. The newest is behind GreenBridge Coffee Shop & Mikes Bikes. Additionally, we are working with Hotel Lora and Wolf Brewery to get containers placed near their locations. Of all the containers downtown, there are nine that have not been "adopted" by local businesses that are being checked and emptied by Bob. We welcome



Invasive Plants and Lily Lake

Reed Canary Grass (Pictured)

In case you have noticed the abundance of tall look-alike plants swaying in the winds along the Lily Lake Park shoreline this summer, be assured that they are part of a long term plan to make Lily Lake a cleaner lake. If you think the shoreline looks uninterestingly the same everywhere, you are right. It is dominated by reed canary grass and narrow leaf cattail. These are tall plants with strong roots that can push their way into disturbed areas where the natural diversity of plants have been destroyed by trampling, construction, road salting, flooding, or erosion. These conditions have long existed around Lily Lake Park, a historically high-use recreation city center.

Although these invasive plants are boringly dominant, they are still functioning in favor of the water quality of Lily Lake. For example, **reed canary grass** thrives on water high in nutrients, even in wastewater treatment ponds! **Reed canary grass** is in the category of an invasive plant because it pushes out smaller plants using its dense, persistent root base; it also blocks sunlight from getting to shorter plants. Since it does not get discouraged easily, it grows right back after cutting and digging it out,



Narrow Leaf Cattail

The other invasive species, narrow-leaf cattail, is very tolerant of salt. During winter, the streets and parking lots may be salted for driving and walking safety. Since narrow-leaf cattails can survive salty water better than other plants, they can thrive when spring snowmelt and rainfall start moving across the land; as they "stand their ground," they are also holding the soil in place even as snow is melting and rain is pounding.



Lily Lake Rain Garden

Sustainable Stillwater MN has offered to try to make at least the rain garden more interesting -- the small fenced space between the pier and the boat launch. Although reed canary grass dominates near shore in the rain garden, there is some opportunity to diversify further inland. We are in the midst of selecting plants that have a chance to survive and hopefully thrive, to make the rain garden more interesting and colorful.



Thank you to Fitzie Heimdahl for removing trees and shrubs from the rain garden! Fitzie is the newest member of Sustainable Stillwater MN's volunteer Natural Resource Team.

-- Louise Watson, Natural Resources Work Group Lead

For More Info, Contact Louise

Zoom Meeting Calendar

>>> Our Board of Directors virtual online Zoom meetings take place every first Thursday of the month from 6.30-8.00 pm and are open to the public. For updated details or to get on the agenda contact Roger Tomten, chair, at sustainablestillwatermn@gmail.com.

>>> The GreenStep team meets in virtual online Zoom meetings on the third Wednesday of the month 6:30 pm – 8:00 pm. For updated details contact sustainablestillwatermn@gmail.com.

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depends on support from people who share our interest in living a green, healthy, and sustainable lifestyle. Tax-deductible contributions help fund our many projects for the natural environment, educational outreach, and for administrative expenses.

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