



Issue 18 | November 2023

Just as ripples spread when a single pebble is dropped into water, the actions of individuals can have far-reaching impact. *The Ripple* is a special newsletter created by Cincinnati Nature Center for people looking for ideas and support in their efforts to protect nature.

Wouldn't it be great if everyone had better information about ways to act (and inspire others to act) for conservation? **Take a minute to share this electronic digest with your friends**—They'll thank you for it!

If someone forwarded you this newsletter and you want to become a regular subscriber, [click here](#).

GET INSPIRED!



Meet the "Change Agents"

There are people who "walk the walk" and those who "talk the talk." Then there's Beth and Bob Staggengborg who take both tactics to the next level: they live environmental advocacy and incorporate it into almost everything they do—be it tending their verdant indigenous garden or hosting meatless meals at the Cincinnati Nature Center.

Long-time Cincinnati Nature Center members—in Beth's case nearly 50 years—the couple's "nature connection work" is constant, infectious, and tends to inspire most anyone they encounter.

[Read the full story](#)

LET'S COLLABORATE!

Are We Making a Difference?

The Ripple is a special newsletter created by Cincinnati Nature Center for people who want ideas, insights, and inspiration to act in support of nature and the environment. But are we on the right track? We want to know if/how this monthly newsletter is serving your needs and how we can improve.

*This survey was previously included in the April 2023 newsletter. **If you have already taken this survey and provided your feedback, no need to do so again.** Thank you!*

[Take the Survey](#)

TAKE ACTION!

November is When We Celebrate Our Right To Vote!

Could ranked choice voting reduce political polarization while reducing special interest group influence and allow people to vote for representatives that represent one's concerns? Some people propose that a ranked-choice system can help. Listen to this podcast to learn more!

[Click to Listen](#)

LEARN MORE TO DO MORE



Ohio Certified Volunteer Naturalist (OCVN) Winter Course

Registration now open! This is the only fully online OCVN course offered by Cincinnati Nature Center each year. It's live on Zoom on Tuesday and Thursday nights from January–March. Tell your friends!

[Click to Register](#)

How can you introduce ideas that might improve the environment in your neighborhood, county, state, or nation? Real change happens when we move beyond our echo chambers and find common ground with people who have

different ideas, values, and priorities. Sound scary? It doesn't have to be.

Check out these resources to help you on your way!

Eight Keys to Bridging Our Differences

There are many misconceptions about bridging differences, so we consulted with researchers and practitioners to clarify what it is—and what it isn't.

- Start with a recognition of common humanity
- It's not about persuasion; it's about understanding
- It doesn't require abandoning your beliefs or values
- It involves inner work, not just action
- Have modesty and humility
- Sometimes it's about small shifts over time
- It often involves taking risks and exposing vulnerabilities

[Click to Learn More](#)

Choose Empathy

One study found that the average American in 2009 was less empathic than 75 percent of Americans just 30 years before. This article claims empathy is like a muscle, which we can build or leave to atrophy. Without it, can we build bridges with others?

[Click to Learn More](#)

Tired of Arguing All the Time?

One thing that can stress people over the holidays are arguments with family members over different ideologies, beliefs, and opinions. How can you talk about the environment and other issues that matter without arguing? Oren Jay Sofer has some tips—Click below to learn more!

[Click to Learn More](#)

An Unappetizing Way to Encourage Plant-Based Diets

Read this research on how using the label "vegetarian" or "vegan" can potentially backfire when trying to get people to try new menu items. This may be worth taking into consideration when trying to influence friends and family to try a plant-based diet.

[Click to Learn More](#)

How Curious Are You, Really?

Curiosity has a range of benefits such as improving your well-being and relationships with everyone from loved ones to strangers. Curiosity is also a potent tool for us to bridge our social and political differences. Take this quiz to see how curious you are!

Take the
Quiz

YOU'RE INVITED!

Below you will find invitations from Cincinnati Nature Center members who are hosting meet-ups around topics and skills that might positively impact conservation. This section of *The Ripple* helps people find each other because we are better together!

Please note, all event participants who are not members of the Nature Center must pay daily admission.

Book Discussion Group

This holiday season, how about leading a book discussion group on peace, connection, and goodwill? Your choice of online or in-person discussions, and you can even choose the location! Choose between *How to Know a Person* by David Brooks, or *The War for Kindness* by Jamil Zaki. To volunteer, contact **Connie O'Connor** at coconnor@cincynature.org.

Join the Cincinnati Nature Center's Native Plant Club!

Thursday, November 9, 6-8 pm

The NEW Cincinnati Nature Center's *Native Plant Club*—for novices to know-it-alls—empowers its members to promote conservation, restoration, and appreciation of native plants in their communities. This is done by sharing knowledge, efforts, inspiration, and resources with one another, toward the shared goal of more native habitat in the region.

Don't want to join a club? Perhaps you might have interest in earning OCVN volunteer hours by giving a talk about some aspect of native plants for the group. Please contact **Connie O'Connor** at coconnor@cincynature.org to inquire about that option.

Click to
Register

Vegetarian Potluck: Holiday Dinner

Tuesday, November 14, 6-8 pm

If you're curious about trying new vegetarian side dishes or entrees, join us for this member-hosted event! Please bring something meat-free to share. You don't have to be a "foodie" to attend—a salad or bread loaf is just fine.

[Click to Register](#)

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Cincinnati Nature Center is calling on volunteer writers to help create content for the *Now in Nature* weekly newsletter. These should be short, informative, interpretive articles. For more info, contact Marketing Manager Tracy Smith at mmahon@cincynature.org. If your piece is used, you can count the time to write it as volunteer credit for your OCVN certification hours.



Sunday Land Stewards **Sundays from 2–5 pm at Cincinnati Nature Center**

Cincinnati Nature Center is dedicated to creating a space for OCVN graduates to continue to bond with each other and earn service hours towards their certification. Every Sunday from 2-5 pm, Volunteer Coordinator Jeremy Garlock will take a group of up to 10 OCVN graduates into the woods to remove non-native species and restore habitat for natives to thrive. This opportunity is exclusive to OCVN graduates, so come earn some hours, meet new people, or catch up with old cohort friends.

Click below to complete the OCVN Sunday Land Stewards Waiver.

[Click to Learn More](#)

Mill Creek Alliance Volunteer Opportunities **Multiple opportunities available now!**

There are a variety of environmental education and outreach programs available throughout October via the Mill Creek Alliance. Click below to review the available slots and sign up.

[Click to Learn More](#)

West End Community Garden Workday

[Saturday, November 4, 9 am–12 pm](#)

After a long season of growing, it's time to start putting the garden to rest. Tasks for this workday will include clearing garden beds of summer plants, laying cardboard and wood chips, and weeding along the fence line of the garden. All are important for ensuring an easy wakeup call in the spring!

Please come prepared wearing closed toed shoes and long pants. Bring a reusable water bottle and gloves if you have them; we will provide extras if needed. There is free parking in a small lot next to the garden.

Please email Kaela at volunteer@civicgardencenter.org with any questions!

[Click to Learn
More](#)

NOTES FROM OUR READERS

Environmentally Friendly Personal Hygiene

You can reduce your carbon footprint and keep yourself clean! There are a number of good hygiene products available that are effective AND are sustainably packaged.

- **[Who Gives A Crap](#)** produces toilet paper, facial tissue, and paper towels made from 100% recycled paper or sustainably grown bamboo. They pledge to use no plastic in their manufacture or packaging. The products are not quite as soft as *Charmin*, but there are no virgin forests being cut down to produce them.
- There are a variety of laundry detergents with minimal packaging and no plastic. [Click here](#) to view a comparison study.
- I have been using **[Earth Breeze](#)** lately. They mail 60 sheets (for 60 loads) in a paper envelope. It cleans well. I have been using **[DIP](#)** premium haircare shampoo bar which is wrapped in paper—it is very nice. I bought it at **[Simply Zero](#)** a locally owned retail store in Over the Rhine which sells a wide range of sustainable household products.
- Procter & Gamble has gotten into zero waste too with **[EC30](#)**—a family of sustainably packaged household products including laundry detergent, toilet cleaner, and others.

Stay clean and earth-friendly - *Bill Hopple*

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Give Us Your Feedback

You're receiving this action-oriented newsletter because either you signed up for it, because you are a graduate of the Nature Center's Ohio Certified Volunteer Naturalist program, or because you have completed *The Ripple Effect* online course.

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If you have suggestions for content or have other input, contact the Director of Applied Learning, Connie O'Connor at coconnor@cincynature.org.

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