

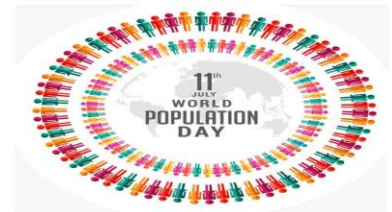
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World Population Day

<https://www.un.org/en/events/populationday/>

July 11 is recognized as World Population Day by the United Nations, a day when attention is brought to the issue of global population dynamics as they pertain to global sustainable development goals. Rising demand for natural resources, driven by a combination of population growth and increasing standards of living, places a strain on the earth and environment, but unfortunately concerns over this demand have often led to problematic positions that denigrate or punish nations and communities already suffering from fewer resources and greater poverty. On World Population Day, we look instead to raise awareness of the need for global gender equality, as well as full enjoyment of reproductive rights and health services. These rights are not shared by all women and families, and they are essential to giving people the ability to make family planning decisions that are best for them.



Established in 1994 at the International Conference on Population and Development, these goals were adopted by 179 governments, and this observance is an opportunity to evaluate our progress towards meeting them and push ourselves to identify and close remaining gaps.

"In the context of a global pandemic, sustained access to maternal and reproductive health services, including family planning, are of paramount importance. This year the focus of World Population Day is on safeguarding the health and rights of women and girls during the Covid-19 pandemic"



Each annual observance includes a theme for that year, and in 2020 World Population Day focuses on ensuring the rights and safety of women and girls around the world, on the heels of a [UN Population Fund](#) report that found three major goals pertaining to women's rights and health are not only off the pace of 2030 targets, but [are being undermined](#) by economic disruptions and other issues exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

House Passes INVEST in America Act

<https://bikeleague.org/content/transportation-bill-passes-house>

The U.S. House of Representatives passed a 5-year transportation funding act in early July, the “INVEST (Investing in a New Vision for the Environment and Surface Transportation) in America” Act, providing for continued and new investments in surface transportation, safety, and research.

As advocated by the Bike League of America in the link above, two notable amendments were added to this bill that could have positive impacts on bicycling around the country, one that would require automobiles to have bumpers and fenders that reduce impact on cyclists and pedestrians in the event of a collision, the other requiring the collection of information on how Federal transportation funding can better work towards equitable outcomes and where inequities have persisted through the years.

Last year, the Senate referred to the Committee on Environment and Public Works their own transportation bill, the ATIA (America’s Transportation Infrastructure Act), which will still likely see additions before being passed and then the House Senate will need to work together to address differences in the bill before a final bill can be passed and sent to the President’s desk.

Further reading on Congressional transportation bills:

- “INVEST in America” [fact sheet](#) provided by the House Transportation Committee
- American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) [response](#) to the House’s bill
- ASCE President’s [statement](#) on the Senate’s ATIA bill introduced in July 2019

[Contact Your Legislators](#)

Use the resources at the linked USA.gov website to let your elected officials know your priorities for the next 5-year transportation funding bill.

Urban Nature as a Source of Resilience During the Pandemic

<https://apha.org/news-and-media/news-releases/apha-news-releases/2020/nature-can-boost-mental-health>

With the many disruptions to our lives over the past few months, it can be easy to increase our focus on basic needs and physical well-being while letting our mental health go unattended. But good mental health is a key component in maintaining overall wellness, and for many of us experiencing greater social isolation and high levels of stress, now is the time to increase our attentiveness to our emotional state. Numerous strategies have been shown to contribute to overall mental wellness on a regular basis, from a healthy diet and adequate sleep, to a supportive social circle and feeling of community, to getting plenty of exercise and practicing mindfulness or other meditative activities.

GOING OUTSIDE...

15% DECREASE IN STRESS HORMONES

MINUTES OUTDOORS HELPS YOU FOCUS BETTER **20**

20% INCREASE IN SHORT-TERM MEMORY

INCREASE IN CREATIVITY AFTER **50%** 4 DAYS IN NATURE

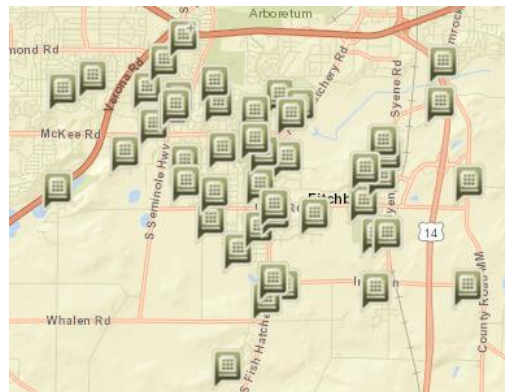
MAY BOOST YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM

Source: <https://www.businessinsider.com/why-spending-more-time-outside-is-healthy-2017-7#with-all-this-its-not-surprising-that-outdoor-time-is-associated-with-a-lower-overall-risk-of-early-death-12>

Image adapted from RubiconOnline.com

What may not get as much attention but deserves its own mention as well, is the role fresh air and access to natural spaces can play in providing psychological health benefits to people. Richard Louv covered this phenomenon over a decade ago in his book [Last Child in the Woods: Savings our Children From Nature-Deficit Disorder](#); and just this year a group of academics from Sweden published an [open-source paper](#), in which they discussed the mental health benefits of urban nature areas as people struggle with the isolation strategies undertaken to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Through its Comprehensive Plan, expansive network of bicycle trails and lanes, community and neighborhood parks, natural areas, lakes and ponds, recreation trails, and more, Fitchburg has made it a priority to preserve natural resources and provide ways for all its residents to access the outdoors. As a follow-up to June as Great Outdoors Month, keep doing your mental health a favor and take some time to get outside!



Use the linked map to search Fitchburg's list of parks and natural areas

IEA Hosts Global Green Recovery Summit

<https://www.iea.org/events/iea-clean-energy-transitions-summit>

This week, on Thursday July 9th, the International Energy Agency hosted a global virtual summit, gathering energy leaders and other representatives from many of the world's largest economies to discuss how the recovery from the current COVID-19 recession can be driven by a focus on renewable energy and other green technologies.

The IEA had already released a [Sustainable Recovery Plan](#), outlining a 3-year strategy for responding to the COVID-19 recession with sustainability-focused initiatives, as well as a [Special Report on Clean Energy Innovation](#), focusing on longer-term transformations to the energy sector. By organizing this summit to focus specifically on these two documents, the IEA has added their voice to the increasing global agreement that as we recover from this pandemic and recession, we must look to do so in a way that increases our commitment to a more sustainable future, starting on the energy side with prioritizing the climate goals set forth by the Paris Climate accords in 2015.

All sessions from the online summit have been archived on YouTube for public viewing and are available from the [main summit page](#).

Staying Cool and Saving Energy

<https://www.energy.gov/energysaver/heat-and-cool/home-cooling-systems>

July tends to be the hottest month in much of the United States, Wisconsin included. Average temperatures will consistently be in the 80s or 90s, and especially as many of us are spending more time at home during the day, that inevitably leads to increased electricity bills from higher fan and air-conditioning use as we want to crank up our cooling options as the temperature starts rising. You can take a number of steps to decrease your need to turn that thermostat down though, or to ensure that your cooling solutions use less energy, saving yourself money and reducing carbon emissions at the same time.

From better insulation and air sealing, to higher-efficiency equipment, programmable or “smart” thermostats, and even natural ventilation, you can maintain a comfortable living space while avoiding sending your energy use through the roof. The U.S. Department of Energy has an infographic as part of their “Energy Saver” online tools, covering [home cooling technologies](#) and how you can look to reduce the energy use associated with your own summer cooling.

Tips for Lowering Your Cooling Costs

Install and set a programmable thermostat – it could help you save up to 10 percent on heating and cooling costs a year.

Use a fan. Ceiling fans will allow you to raise the thermostat setting about 4 degrees without impacting your comfort.

Insulate your attic and walls, and seal cracks and openings to prevent warm air from leaking into your home.

Insulate and seal ducts -- air loss through ducts accounts for about 30 percent of a cooling system's energy consumption.

Don't heat your home with appliances. On hot days, consider using an outdoor grill instead of your oven.

Install energy-efficient window coverings that let natural light in and prevent solar heat gain.

Buy an ENERGY STAR-qualified AC unit -- on average, they're up to 15 percent more efficient than standard models.

Use the bathroom fan when taking a shower or bath and a range hood when cooking -- this helps remove heat and humidity from your home.

SOURCES: Energy Saver (www.energy.gov/energysaver), the Energy Department's Building Technologies Office (www.energy.gov/eere/buildings/building-technologies-office), Energy Star (www.energystar.gov), Weatherization Assistance Program Technical Assistance Center (www.waptac.org)



Upcoming Events

Plastic-Free EcoChallenge

We've seen a rise in disposable, single-use items, especially plastics, as we take every effort to limit the spread of COVID-19; but we can still pursue waste reduction strategies in many areas of our lives!

Sponsored by the Coalition of North American Zoos and Aquariums, this month EcoChallenge.org is inviting participants to create a team with their workplace, school, or a community group (or join the existing "Community Team") and pledge to learn about the waste they generate and take steps to reduce that waste moving forward.

July 1-31, 2020

<https://plasticfree.ecochallenge.org/>



MadiSUN Solar Group-Buy Info Sessions

Renew Wisconsin has added more public information webinar sessions to their calendar for 2020, so residents interested in a group-buy effort for solar panels on their home still have an opportunity to learn about this program and sign up! To learn about the program online, follow the link below; click on "Events" at the top of the page to see and sign up for info sessions.

July 16 & August 11 at 12pm

July 27 and August 19 at 7pm

<https://madisunsolar.com/group-buy-for-homes/>

Governor's Climate Task Force Public Meeting



Governor Evers created a Task Force on Climate Change through an executive order in October of 2019. The group has met multiple times over the past 8 months and will meet again this fall before delivering recommendations to the Governor regarding how the state of Wisconsin can best respond to the broad scope of threats presented by global climate change. A third and final public virtual listening session is set for next week, and registration will open soon at the Meetings page (linked from the task force page below) .

July 15, 2020, 6pm-8pm

<https://climatechange.wi.gov/Pages/Home.aspx>

Share the News

Tell your friends to subscribe to Green Fitchburg on the city website
<http://www.fitchburgwi.gov/list.aspx> > Green Fitchburg

- a. Visit Fitchburg's "Notify Me®" web page:
<http://www.fitchburgwi.gov/list.aspx>
- b. Type your email address in the box and select "Sign In"
- c. To receive text messages enter your phone number and select "Save"
- d. Click  (to subscribe/unsubscribe to emails) and/or  (to subscribe/unsubscribe) next to the lists to which you wish to subscribe / unsubscribe (e.g. "Green Fitchburg" is the mailing list for environmentally friendly suggestions or events)

Please contact Phil Grupe, Sustainability Specialist, at phil.grupe@fitchburgwi.gov or 270-4259, if you have any questions, comments, and/or suggestions for future Green E-News topics.

