



Watershed Nature Center thankful for generous \$20,000 donation from Rotary for shoreline classroom

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
August 3 2017 4:38 PM



EDWARDSVILLE - The Edwardsville Rotary Club and the Watershed Nature Center in Edwardsville are two organizations always working to improve the region. Recently, the Rotary Club announced a donation of \$20,000 to help fund a new Shoreline Classroom.

The outdoor classroom will be near the Watershed Visitor's Center and will include an amphitheater-style boulder seating area built into the existing hillside.

An ADA-compliant concrete path will lead into the space.

Watershed Nature Center Board and Executive Director, Sarah Palermo, couldn't say enough positive things about Rotary and what they do for the Watershed Nature Center and the Edwardsville-Glen Carbon regions.

"This will under write our Shoreline Classroom Field Trips and educational sessions and rentals right next to the welcome center," Palermo said. "We have over 40 acres and sometimes we conduct field trips. This will be close to the center and parking lot and enable the students to spend more time learning."

Palermo said Rotary has donated some large grants to the Watershed Nature Center in the past, which have made a significant difference in the organization.

Palermo said things are going great at the moment at the Watershed Nature Center. "We had one of the busiest months in June we have ever had," she said. "We worked with the Madison County Extension Office and hosted an evening garden tour that brought about 50 new people to the Watershed. We also partnered with the Edwardsville Children's Museum for a pre-K nature sprouts program. We had a good month."

Access Nature

Shoreline Classroom - Underwritten by the Edwardsville Rotary Club, summary by Palermo and Watershed staff:

The shoreline amphitheater will be an accessible area for groups engaged in nature-based educational programs. The presence of a Shoreline Classroom located in close proximity to the entryway and Visitor Center will allow for flexibility in teaching, efficient use of time, and a safe learning experience. This outdoor classroom will enable us to incorporate the use of scientific tools. Often, expensive microscopes are used to examine pond water and aquatic animal specimens. An outdoor classroom close to the building will enable students to examine aquatic life on-site, rather than having to carry heavy samples and equipment to the elevated marsh walk, a 1/4 of a mile away.

The classroom will consist of a small amphitheater-style boulder seating area built into the existing hillside, with a crushed stone dust central "stage" and boulder outcroppings down at the water's edge. An ADA-compliant concrete path will lead into space from the existing path above.

About Watershed Nature Center

The Watershed Nature Center is home to over 40 acres of native Illinois restored habitat- prairie, forest, and wetland- located in the city of Edwardsville. The center features paved walking trails, a raised marsh walk, and a Welcome Center. The Watershed Nature Center is managed by the Nature Preserve Foundation in conjunction with the City of Edwardsville Parks and Recreation Department. The Nature Preserve Foundation is dedicated to providing environmental education for people of all ages, passive recreation, and enjoyment of native habitats at the Watershed Nature Center.

In partnership with the City of Edwardsville and the Recreation and Parks Department, the Nature Preserve Foundation is undertaking major park improvement project, Access Nature. This project will modify the entrance at the Watershed Nature Center to allow for greater access and understanding of native habitats located in the park. A large, open Education Meadow will host groups of students and visitors in one location at the entrance to the park and a Shoreline Classroom located next to the Welcome Center will provide direct water access and teaching in a formal, outside setting. Way finding signage, animal and plant identification markers and native plantings will enable visitors of all ages and abilities to appreciate and understand nature.

For more info, contact the Watershed Nature Center at (618) 692-7578.

