

Media Advisory

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The Greening of the Monroe Street Festival

Pop-up parks to highlight green urbanism and green infrastructure along Monroe Street

MADISON – A new green urbanism initiative will enable festival-goers to learn about innovative “green” street design and infrastructure practices that could turn the Monroe Street area into a vibrant “eco-district” that draws people to visit local shops, boutiques and restaurants while preserving, highlighting, and enhancing the area’s exceptional natural and historic resources.

The Greening of Monroe Street features ten stations that showcase innovative approaches to green infrastructure and green-street design, including:

- Landscaped Pop-up Parks made up of sod, native trees and shrubs, and potted plants to create an outdoor living room and gathering space along the street right-a-way.
- Design Visions for the Crazy Legs Triangle and nearby intersections that show a vibrant Monroe Street Corridor using pedestrian friendly scale and green infrastructure features.
- Zero Waste Stations with receptacles and signage to clarify materials that can be recycled or composted and where to put them.
- Displays and educational materials by the Friends of Lake Wingra, Edgewood Sustainable Leadership Program, WEI, Formecology Landscape Design and the Monroe Street Library.
- Wisconsin Bike Fed and Pedestrian Safety Demonstrations.
- Tours along the Dudgeon Monroe Neighborhood Nature and History Trail.

The 38th annual event is organized by the Monroe Street Merchants Association and features sidewalk sales, live entertainment and children’s activities. The Monroe Street Festival is supported by local businesses including Monroe Street Green members that utilize the stewardship tools and innovative best practices developed by WEI (Wisconsin Environmental Initiative).

“The Greening of the Monroe Street Festival is an innovative way to showcase the potential of “green urbanism” and “green infrastructure” approaches in our community,” said John Imes, Executive Director of Wisconsin Environmental Initiative. “By incorporating cutting edge green design and sustainable practices along Monroe Street, we can protect extraordinary natural resources while creating an even more dynamic shopping destination.”

Monroe Street Festival / Saturday, Oct. 10, 2015 / 10am to 5pm / www.monroestreetfestival.com

“Monroe Street is fortunate to be situated close to Wingra and Vilas Park, and adjacent to Lake Wingra,” said Orange Schroeder, co-owner of Orange Tree Imports and head of the Monroe Street Merchants Association. “We helped launch Monroe Street Green three years ago to demonstrate how local businesses can be good stewards of the environment. We are pleased to be able to

showcase our efforts — as well as those of other local environmental groups -- through a series of ten different innovative activities at this year's Monroe Street Festival."

"We are presented with an amazing opportunity to improve our community, enhance our watershed, and protect Lake Wingra through the use of green infrastructure and place-making on Monroe Street," said Ben Yahr, President of the Friends of Lake Wingra. "This is our chance to make meaningful progress on improving lake health with clean, clear water, restored spring flow, and a community that feels a connection to the lake."

"Our community is asking for streets that are much more than asphalt automobile corridors overlying sewer pipes. Streets should be central components of vibrant public spaces that support thriving local businesses within healthy and walkable neighborhoods," said Jim Lorman, PhD Professor and Community Partnership Specialist for the Edgewood College Sustainability Leadership Graduate Program. "People want easy access to natural green spaces, and they want to be able to get places they need to go using a variety of modes of transit, including walking and biking, that are environmentally-friendly and safe. -- Monroe Street can be a model for this kind of sustainable design."

Founded in 1995, the Wisconsin Environmental Initiative (WEI) works to improve the environment, economy and quality of Wisconsin through initiatives that promote responsible business practices, sound environmental policy, green building and water stewardship. Among WEI's most successful programs are Green Built Home, Travel Green Wisconsin and WEI's newest initiatives: Main Street Green and Clean Clear Waters.

The Greening of Monroe Street initiative is organized by WEI's Monroe Street Green program in partnership with the Friends of Lake Wingra, Edgewood College Sustainable Leadership Program and LV Brown Studio, with support by the Monroe Street Merchants Association, Dudgeon Monroe Neighborhood Association, Jung Garden Centers, Badger Volunteers, Wingra Boats, Trader Joe's, Michael's Custard and Hotel Red.

For more details about WEI's initiatives, please visit www.weigogreener.org.