Educational Opportunities at Lakeshore State Park

Lakeshore State Park offers a variety of educational experiences for learners of all ages, including walks, tours, lectures and hands-on outdoor activities and laboratory exercises. Programs can be tailored to fit specific content needs and address Next Generation Science Standards. The classes complement the range of local environmental education opportunities by offering participants a chance to experience the Great Lakes firsthand.

In 2019 alone, park staff delivered 102 educational programs to 9,525 participants, including 10 fishing classes. There were 44 field trips, 49 programs for the general public, and nine offsite programs. Participants came from nonprofit organizations, K-12 schools, universities, summer programs and volunteer groups in addition to the general public. Lakeshore State Park also serves as an off-site location for Milwaukee Recreation programs; in 2018, 70 of 90 grant-funded Milwaukee Rec field trip busses came to LSP. People of color comprised half of these participants, and a projected 65% were of low income. LSP is the only park in the Wisconsin State Park system that does not charge admission, making these programs accessible to all.

Our Vision for the Visitor and Education Center

The stunning, sleek, modern structure will be located next to the marina, on the northern end of the park. The building will promote year-round usage of the park, provide shelter during inclement weather for visitors and educational groups, and provide a teaching tool about water and our environment.

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Exterior Features:
Outdoor Plaza with fireplace to accommodate up to 300 visitors
Solar Energy Panels over the plaza
Outdoor Stone Terrace
Stormwater Green Infrastructure
Wetlands
Native agriculture gardens

Interior Features
Atrium Gathering Area
Classroom & Meeting Room
Interactive Educational Displays & Materials
Park Management Office
Restrooms
Shower & 24/7 secure access for marina patrons

“As the UWM School of Architecture and Urban Planning worked on the project at the early stages, I am aware of the challenges of the building program... You have skillfully crafted a very engaging, sustainable solution which provides a powerful enhancement to the park.... It is a jewel of a building and I look forward to seeing it under construction.” – Dean Robert Greenstreet, UWM School of Architecture and Urban Planning
Lakeshore State Park holds a coveted location on Milwaukee’s lakefront, within walking distance of downtown for thousands of residents and employees. Established in 2007, Lakeshore State Park serves as the eastern gateway to and the only urban park in the Wisconsin State Park System. Located along the shores of Lake Michigan, a distinctive island serves as the park’s focal point, with natural prairies attracting birds and other wildlife. The 22-acre park includes a 1.7-mile trail that connects to the Hank Aaron State Trail and Milwaukee’s Oak Leaf Trail; a watercraft beach area with access for canoes, paddleboats and kayaks; fishing areas and 20 boat slips for vessels up to 60 feet in length with overnight boat camping available. The park extends from Discovery World on the north to Erie Street on the south.

Why does the Park Need a Visitor and Education Center?
Lakeshore State Park hosts 405,000 visitors annually for activities ranging from individuals walking, running and biking through the park to educational tours for school children and organized social events. The park lacks any indoor amenities; an abrupt change of weather or the need for facilities can significantly alter these plans and limits usage of the park during Wisconsin’s long winter.

The Time Is NOW
For a Visitor and Education Center

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