

# Nature & You/U: Reconnect, Recharge, Renew

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# Agenda

## Reconnect

- The power of nature
- Mental and physical health impacts

## Recharge

- Nature Rx resources and app
- Nature and work

## Renew

- Campaigns
- Resources sheet
  - 20 invitations & more!

## Objectives:

- Support you with nature toolkit practices and ideas
- Share ideas for connecting you, your team, friends, family with nature



“We often forget that we are nature. Nature is not something separate from us. So when we say that we have lost our connection to nature, we’ve lost our connection to ourselves.”

- Andy Goldsworthy  
International artist & photographer based in Scotland

# A few terms:

- Nature Rx: initiative to support nature contact for holistic health and well-being
- Nature Rx at Michigan: team working to connect U-M with nature
- Big nature: national parks, sweeping vistas, open terrain
- Little nature: tree, leaf, bud, flower, plant, insect; noticing nearby nature or small details
- Descriptions: Nature Fans, nature-ness, nature-centric, nature-forward

# Reconnect!

The Transformative Power of Nature



When walking [or moving] anywhere, go slower than usual. Pause. Relax. Notice nature. Take the hurry out of life. By redirecting attention away from our thoughts and toward the scenery, we root ourselves in the present moment, using the environment to help calm and relax the mind.” – Poketo/Headspace



**We  
believe  
nature can  
heal.**

**NATURE RX**



# Specific health benefits of nature exposure

Increases/improvements in	Decreases in
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Physical activity</li><li>● Cardiovascular health</li><li>● Sleep</li><li>● Immunity</li><li>● Birth outcomes</li><li>● Managing ADHD symptoms</li><li>● Focus and restorative properties</li><li>● Sense of well-being, self concept, and resiliency</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Postoperative recovery time</li><li>● Hypertension</li><li>● Depression symptoms</li><li>● Stress and anxiety</li><li>● Rumination</li></ul>

# The “why”: How does time and access to nature heal holistically?

Time spent in nature has been shown to...

- Improve cognitive ability, boost concentration, increase attention
  - Kaplan's Attention Restoration Theory
- Boost physical health
- Reduce stress and feelings of overwhelm
- Increasing social connections and the quality of social relationships
- Positively benefit mood and sense of overall well-being

NATURE RX





## **Indigenous knowledge**

**In some Native languages, the term for plants translates to “those who take care of us.”**

-Robin Wall Kimmerer, author of “Braiding Sweetgrass,”  
Potawatomi botanist, scholar and director of the Center for  
Native Peoples at the State University of New York

# Case Study: Who is a gardener?

**You're a gardener if you've...**

**NATURE RX**



# You're a gardener if you've...

- Loved a plant

NATURE RX



# You're a gardener if you've...

- Loved a plant
- Not loved some plant

NATURE RX



# You're a gardener if you've...

- Loved a plant
- Not loved some plant
- Noticed an insect

NATURE RX



# You're a gardener if you've...

- Loved a plant
- Not loved some plant
- Noticed an insect
- Not liked the insect you noticed

NATURE RX



# You're a gardener if you've...

- Loved a plant
- Not loved some plant
- Noticed an insect
- Not liked the insect you noticed
- Grown a plant

NATURE RX



# You're a gardener if you've...

- Loved a plant
- Not loved some plant
- Noticed an insect
- Not liked the insect you noticed
- Grown a plant
- Killed a plant (accidentally, of course)

NATURE RX



# You're a gardener if you've...

- Loved a plant
- Not loved some plant
- Noticed an insect
- Not liked the insect you noticed
- Grown a plant
- Killed a plant (accidentally, of course)
- Touched blue or green

NATURE RX



# You're a gardener if you've...

- Loved a plant
- Not loved some plant
- Noticed an insect
- Not liked the insect you noticed
- Grown a plant
- Killed a plant (accidentally, of course)
- Touched blue or green
- Planted a tree

NATURE RX



# You're a gardener if you've...

- Loved a plant
- Not loved some plant
- Noticed an insect
- Not liked the insect you noticed
- Grown a plant
- Killed a plant (accidentally, of course)
- Touched blue or green
- Planted a tree
- NOTICED a tree

NATURE RX



# You're a gardener if you've...

- Loved a plant
- Not loved some plant
- Noticed an insect
- Not liked the insect you noticed
- Grown a plant
- Killed a plant (accidentally, of course)
- Touched blue or green
- Planted a tree
- NOTICED a tree
- Breathed outside

NATURE RX



**CONGRATULATIONS!**  
**You're a gardener!**



# Unique Gardening Benefits

## Supports physical health:

- Exercise, balance, coordination (bend, squat, dig, cut, water)
- Lowered blood pressure; muscle and bone strengthening

## Mental and emotional health:

- Caring for plants
- Reduces stress, improves mood
- Supports memory, attention, problem-solving, sense of accomplishment, control

## Also:

- Aids creativity, improves diet, Vitamin D!
- Spiritual and social connections and community!

# The gardener's mindset

- It's all an experiment!
- There are many seasons in a gardener's life.  
Be/live in this one.



All life is an  
experiment. The more  
experiments you make  
the better.

-Ralph Waldo Emerson



**Nature teaches  
us that we can  
begin again.**

**Today is a new  
day!**



# Recharge:

Nature Rx resources + app

# Nature Rx Project Team



# NATURE RX HISTORY AT U-M

History to date ...

**~ 2019**

MBGNA Nursing  
Intern  
Develops idea



**2019**

Students create  
initial interface  
in ArcGIS with  
more than 100  
locations

**2020**

Voices project  
Voices of the Staff  
project work begins

**2022**

Digital Ux Team in  
ITS creates Nature  
Rx beta in  
Michigan app

**2023**

App with location  
features launched;  
121,000 views in  
first year

**2024**

- Website  
launched  
-Outreach  
programs &  
presentations  
-Symposium!

**2025**

-Collaborations  
-Stakeholders  
-MHealthy  
integration  
-Future structures,  
programs, comms

**NATURE RX**

# Nature breaks with Nature Rx

- Group activities
- Promote nature access with our app featuring 100+ nature spaces at UM Ann Arbor
- Website with calendar and resources
- Engage community with health-promoting fun

[nature-rx.umich.edu](http://nature-rx.umich.edu)



**NATURE RX**



# NATURE RX POTENTIAL

- Positively impact everyone affiliated with UM
- Profoundly affect our health, mental health & well-being
- Deeply connect us and improve our relationship with nature
- Support other holistic well-being efforts—social prescribing
- Invitations & prescriptions



# Leaders & Best

# Leaders & Be



# Why nature contact at work works

31% more productive, greater job satisfaction & less stress

20% lower levels of depression and anxiety with exposure to natural environments at work

10 minutes outdoors: boosts attention, mood, and creativity

Increased workplace engagement & decreased absenteeism

**NATURE RX**

# Integrating nature into work & life

What could we do, together?

- Outdoor meeting
- Check out [Take a Break with Nature Rx](#) for your team
- Volunteer – workdays at the Arb or other opportunities
- Host a plant swap or just talk about plants
- Take your laptop outside
- Lunch or snack outside—in all seasons!
- Use the [Nature Rx App](#) to explore
- Even nature images help



# “A Breath of Fresh Air” Guided Nature Experiences

- Experience nature in all its forms, rain or shine!
- Sensory awareness and mindfulness practices
- Held quarterly in different locations
- Led by mental health teams

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# Renew

Nature as Restorative

# Spiritual Well-Being and Awe



## “How does awe transform us?”

By quieting the nagging, self-critical, overbearing, status-conscious voice of our self, or ego, and empowering us to collaborate, to open our minds to wonders, and to see the deep patterns in life.”

Dacher Keltner, “Awe: The New Science of Everyday Wonder and How It Can Transform Your Life”

# Spirituality in nature ideas

- Contemplation space, memorial or honoring garden
- Collection of natural objects for pondering
- Ponder purpose and meaning outdoors
- Gratitude experience or meditation
- Invite your team to go on a nature and spiritual exploration experience
- Talk about the need for big nature & small nature





# One more inspiration

“I find myself defined these days more by what I cannot see than by what I can. As I wander into the predawn dark of an autumn wood, I feel the presence of things beyond flesh, bone, and blood. My being expands to fit the limitlessness of the wild world. My senses flush to full and my heartbeat quickens with the knowledge that I am not alone.”

*The Home Place: Memoirs of a Colored Man's Love Affair with Nature* by J. Drew Lanham

# What if....

5 Campaign ideas!

“I invite you to make your own life a laboratory for the nature revolution. And one of the first elements...you may not immediately associate with the natural world: the current crisis in human attention...it’s the common resource that our cognitive, physical, social, and emotional health depends on.”

(Marc Berman, *Nature and the Mind: The Science of How Nature Improves Cognitive, Physical, and Social Well-Being*)

# Tech Support Campaign: Consider green time in place of screen time

- Consider a pause in nature without your phone
- Try your regular physical activity without it
- Take a device-free nature break with colleagues or family
- Write a card or note in nature





## Guardrails Guidance from Prof. Jenny Radesky, UM

1. Device and wifi settings
2. Making a plan/setting a routine
3. Finding alternative activities
4. Reducing overuse / doom scrolling / losing track of time

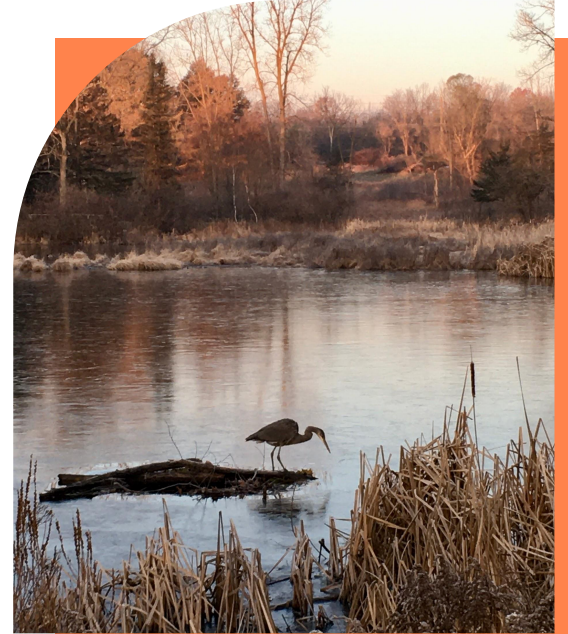
# Attention Restoring Campaign



**Solitude**



**Boredom**



**Single-tasking**

From scroll to stroll

From liking to hiking  
or biking

From worry to flurry  
(snow, leaves, dust)

From reels to real


# From screen time to green time

From touchscreen to  
touch grass or snow

What if your feed fed  
you nature?



***BREAKING NEWS!!!!***



# **‘Try Winter’ Campaign!**

## Invitation to think of winter as a source of inspiration

### Consider:

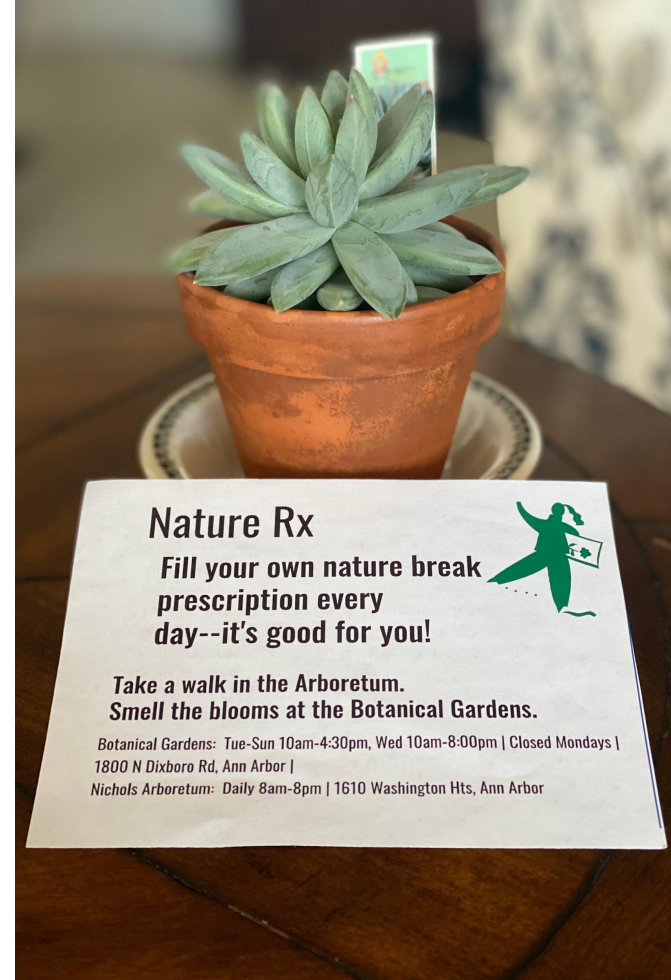
- 4 elements in winter–air, earth, water, fire:
  - heat, cold
  - bringing warmth to routines
  - outdoor pastimes
- Check out bark; adopt a tree
- Consider grey, white, shadow, contrast, many forms of water
- What is the air doing

**How might this season of rest in nature provide rest for you?**

# Nature Prescriptions Campaign

- Partner with health insurance companies (Hello, BCBS of Michigan) to pilot nature prescriptions
- Research on nature interventions and barriers
- Engage with community partners
- Michigan Medicine nature prescriptions

Relates to [Look to Michigan](#) “Enhance the health support and prevention infrastructure ... activities that promote physical and mental health” and “Broaden efforts for improved access to health and prevention services”



# Recap & Takeaways



## Mental & Emotional Health Resources

- [Mental and Emotional Health | Human Resources University of Michigan](#)
  - Free, confidential counseling
  - Leader consultations & programs
- [Stress Management Tools and Resources](#)
- [Brief Guide for a Well-Being Check In](#)
  - Guide for teams, faculty and staff

**BRAND NEW!**

# Nature break invitation template for you!

Invite colleagues, your team,  
friends, family to join you for a  
live or synchronous nature break

## Nature Break Invitation

Let's explore how time in nature supports well-being.

TO: \_\_\_\_\_ FROM: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

### I invite you to:

Join me • Join our team or group • Explore on your own

### For: (Check ALL that apply)

- An outdoor meeting
- A walk, stroll, or roll in the woods
- A "sense & savor" outing (use 5 senses to explore and savor)
- Notice the clouds or trees
- Some fresh air
- Journaling or drawing outdoors
- A sunrise or sunset
- Looking for green and blue in nature, or all the colors of the rainbow
- Visiting some gardens & talking about plants
- A tech pause or break
- An awe outing (enjoy nature as a source of inspiration and wonder)
- Explore the Nature Rx app & upcoming events with me
- This fun nature idea: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes:



**Nature Rx**



**NATURE RX**



## Nature and Curiosity:

“Every time you encounter a plant—in the park, in your apartment, in the cracks of the sidewalk—it’s a chance to get curious about nature.”

- Summer Rayne Oaks  
Houseplant and horticulture fan



# The road ahead:

- It's all an experiment; it's all a pilot!
- Be curious & try!
- How will you nature today and tomorrow?
- You're a gardener and nature fan!
- Put nature on your to-do list, right up there with "joy"

**CONGRATULATIONS!**

**You're now part of....**

# Generation N=Nature

- The new nature-connected generation!
- Spans all years, interests, abilities for nature-forward, nature-centric actions to support flourishing and healing



# QR code with presentation resources



**EXTRAS!**



## Off the beaten path–noticing nature

“We are all too much inclined, I think, to walk through life with our eyes shut. There are things all round us and right at our very feet that we have never seen, because we have never really looked...”

Leave the beaten track occasionally and dive into the woods. Every time you do so you will be certain to find something that you have never seen before...one discovery will lead to another...”

- “Discovery and Invention,” Alexander Graham Bell, in an address to the graduating class of the Friends’ School, Washington, D.C., May 22, 1914