



# ECOLOGY Annual Report

ACTION CENTER 2018



**The Ecology Action Center is a not-for-profit environmental agency with a mission to inspire and assist our community in creating, strengthening, and preserving a healthy environment. The EAC acts as a central resource for environmental education, information, outreach, and technical assistance in McLean County.**

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# A NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Author Bill McKibben, in his 1989 book *The End of Nature* wrote, “There is a tendency at every important but difficult crossroad to pretend that it’s not really there.” 2018 brought us to numerous crossroads. Multiple unprecedented events occurred, with ominous implications for the future.

- McLean County Landfill reached capacity and closed. While this event was long-anticipated (EAC has been monitoring the declining capacity for 15 years or more), this means that any waste we don’t recycle or compost needs to be transported increasingly further away for disposal in a landfill.
- Global atmospheric carbon emissions reached a new record high (37.1 billion metric tons) and total carbon dioxide concentrations in the atmosphere reached the highest recorded level ever (407 parts per million).
- International scientists made an unparalleled call to action to address climate change, noting that we have only 12 years to reduce our global carbon emissions by half, to avoid significant changes in our environment. The Fourth National Climate Assessment was released here in the U.S. about a month later, detailing the increasingly likely impacts from climate change in detail, noting specific risks to agriculture, forestry, biodiversity, human health, infrastructure, and community vulnerability.
- Due to contamination issues in recycling, China banned importations of certain types of waste and dramatically tightened its standards for impurities in scrap bales, from an allowable 5% of impurities to .05%. This action caused a ripple effect in recycling markets worldwide and shook confidence in recycling programs across the nation.



Honestly, it's news like this that keeps me awake at night. These times that we live in are simultaneously some of the most challenging times ever to be doing environmental work and the most critical.

That's why I am grateful for all of the broad-based support the EAC has in our community; this support has allowed us to come so far in decades past to address many local environmental issues. Equally important, this broad-based support has allowed us to grow and professionalize our organization to better prepare us for the environmental needs of the future.

It seems as though the future is here — and I feel the EAC is well-prepared to meet these challenges. In brief response to the issues I previously outlined:

- Building upon decades of successful recycling programs in our community, the EAC successfully led the creation of a new, assertive 20-year waste management plan to provide direction for more waste diversion while also increasing the economic benefit from doing so.
- Several years of work by the EAC in quantifying local sources of greenhouse gas emissions is culminating in a new local report and will directly lead into a local collaborative effort for a clean air plan to address climate change and other air quality issues.
- Working with local recyclers and other solid waste agencies across the state, the EAC has locally launched a completely new approach to recycling messaging, removing ambiguity in order to significantly reduce contamination in our recycling streams.

As always — the EAC is on the job, preparing, planning, educating, and leading the way for a healthy environment in central Illinois. Your ongoing support — be it through financial contributions, volunteering, helping to spread our messaging, or all of the above, is more crucial than ever.

I am grateful that we're all in this together. We make a good team.



*Closing the McLean County Landfill*

**Michael Brown** | Executive Director

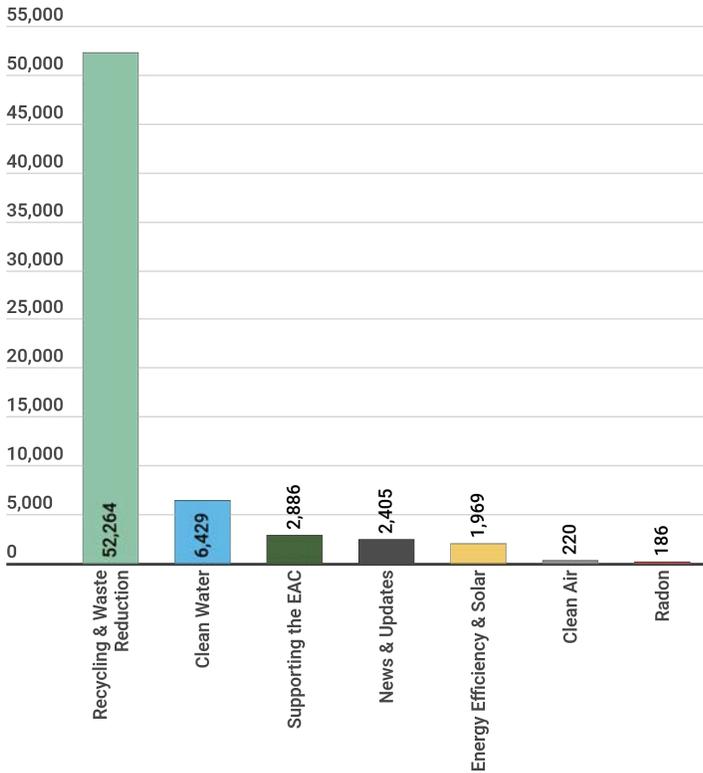


# EDUCATION & OUTREACH

## The Ecology Action Center provides:

- Solid waste education to fulfill the Illinois Solid Waste Planning and Recycling Act requirements for McLean County, Bloomington, and Normal;
- Storm water education to meet the public education requirements of the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System Phase II Storm Water Management Plans for Bloomington, Normal, McLean County, and the Bloomington-Normal Water Reclamation District;
- Energy efficiency education and outreach for Bloomington and Normal, including residential and small business energy assessments;
- Air quality data through our greenhouse gas emissions inventory process, and the development of a Community Energy Strategic Plan to reduce emissions; and
- Distribution of resources on numerous sustainability topics.

## 66,359 website visits



The Ecology Action Center performs extensive media outreach to share information, spread awareness, and promote upcoming events or initiatives we're working on. We share information through newspaper ads, radio commercials, and direct newspaper and radio interviews.



1,349,457

Total Reach



686,457

Recycling & Waste Reduction



548,100

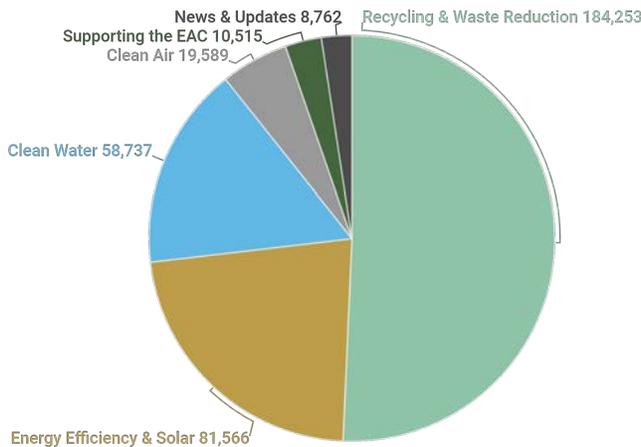
Energy Efficiency & Solar



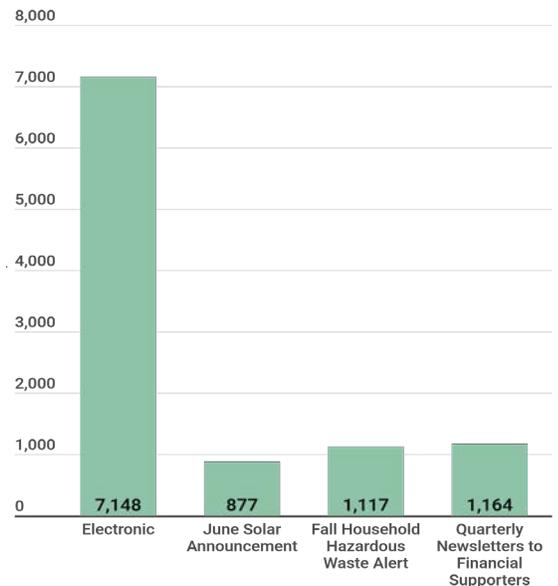
114,900

Clean Water

## 363,422 Facebook and Twitter interactions



## Newsletters sent



The EAC administers and promotes McFreecycle, a free listserv for the free exchange of materials in McLean County to avoid disposal of useable items



1,939

Current members



21.5

Average number of messages exchanged monthly

While membership continues to increase, usage of the service appears to be declining. This is likely due to redundant "free items" services now available as a part of social media platforms like Facebook and Nextdoor.com.



## IN THE COMMUNITY

The Ecology Action Center actively shares information with residents and businesses by participating in various events, from workplace health and wellness fairs to community-wide events.

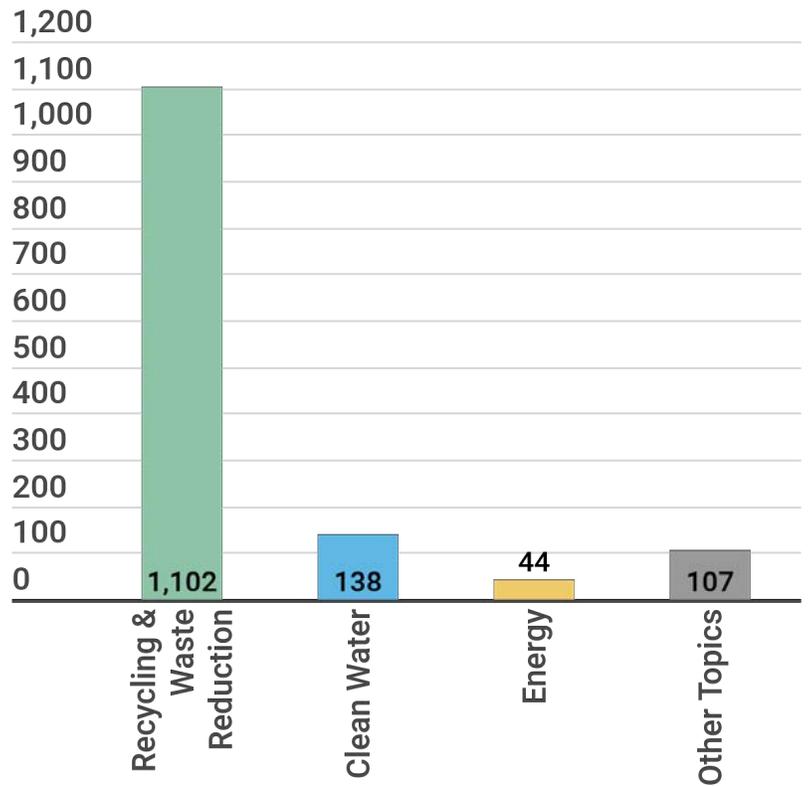
You might be used to seeing EAC staff members at information booths promoting recycling, clean water, energy efficiency, solar programs, and clean air. We even actively help demonstrate effective waste reduction strategies and recycling practices at some events.

In 2018, the EAC held 23 community presentations reaching 450 people



● Recycling & Waste Reduction ● Clean Water ● Energy

1,391 inquiries were answered by phone, email, and in person



### Information booths



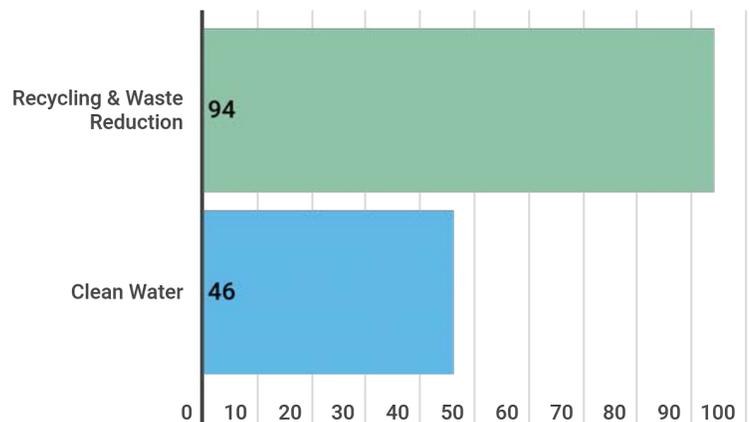
1,831

people reached

**Booths included:**

- Sweet Corn Blues Festival
- Sugar Creek Arts Festival
- Children's Discovery Museum's Worldwide Day of Play
- Advocate BroMenn Earth Day Fair
- Heartland Community College's Lifelong Learning event

140 youth programs were held, including visits to 107 classrooms and 8 libraries, reaching 3,398 kids





The EAC held its annual Sustainable Gourmet fundraiser in the fall at Reality on Monroe. The chefs at Reality Bites created some unique dishes with food from local farmers and food suppliers like PrairiErth Farms, Sitka Salmon, and Green Top Grocery.

The event also featured a sampling of sustainably produced wines from Stave Wine Bar, and locally crafted beer from Keg Grove Brewing Company and Destihl. Destihl provided a special Pumpkin Spice Moonjumper Milk Stout along with some other beer options, and Keg Grove Brewing used apples and elderberries foraged by the EAC staff and volunteers to create an Elderberry Apple Hefeweizen for the event!

The event was a huge success thanks to our wonderful supporters, sponsors, attendees, food and drink providers, and all the local businesses and individuals that donated items for our silent auction. A big thank you to everyone who participated in the event for their ongoing support!





## EAC ASSISTANT DIRECTOR HONORED

Larissa Armstrong, the EAC's Assistant Director, was named one of the Twenty Under Forty Leaders of Distinction by The Pantagraph and McLean County Chamber of Commerce.

The Twenty Under Forty program celebrates young professionals who are making a difference in their community. Larissa was recognized for her work at the EAC and the time she volunteers at numerous other non-profit and social service organizations in our community.



# MCLEAN COUNTY GREEN AWARDS

In tribute to early EAC Director Anne McGowan who passed away in 2015, we renamed one of our annual green awards in her honor. The Anne McGowan Making a World of Difference Award recognizes outstanding projects, activities, or individuals in McLean County who promote environmental awareness or natural resource conservation.

The EAC recognized Sherrie Snyder as the 2018 recipient of the Anne McGowan Making a World of Difference Award for her leadership in creating the local chapter of Wild Ones. This organization is devoted to educating the public about the importance of restoring native plants to our landscapes, private and public, in order to help sustain the complex web of life on which we all depend.

In the fall of 2010, Sherrie organized a meeting to gauge interest in forming this group, which quickly resulted in the official formation of the Illinois Prairie Wild Ones. She has since then skillfully guided this chapter into not only one of central Illinois' most productive volunteer groups as they work for a more ecologically sustainable and resilient community of life, but also one of the largest and most active chapters of Wild Ones in the nation.



Photo of Sherrie Snyder courtesy of WGLT

Our second green award is the McLean County Recycling and Waste Reduction Award, which recognizes outstanding recycling programs or waste reduction efforts. This year we recognized Julie McCoy's successful recycling and compost programs at District 87 schools that resulted in a significant diversion of waste from our landfill.

In addition to recycling paper and other materials, Julie organized a program to compost all of the food waste from District 87 schools. Since the program's inception in 2014, the food waste composting program at Bloomington High, Bloomington Junior High, Bent, Irving, Oakland, Sheridan, Stevenson, and Washington schools has diverted 99,727 pounds of organic waste from the landfill, nearly 50 tons. This also means the program avoided generating 44 metric tons of greenhouse gases.

This effort is not only impressive in its metrics, but also because the students at these schools are actively learning how practices like these benefit our community and environment.



*Sherrie Snyder*



*Julie McCoy*



# RECYCLING & WASTE REDUCTION

The Ecology Action Center is the solid waste agency for McLean County, the City of Bloomington, and the Town of Normal, and receives funding through the McLean County Solid Waste Fund.

Through numerous educational and outreach programs, the EAC assists residents and businesses in

- reducing waste,
- increasing recycling, and
- properly disposing of hazardous waste.

These include our 4th-grade recycling classroom programs, waste reduction presentations and informational booths at local events, our biennial Household Hazardous Waste collection, and the widely-used Recycle Coach app.



In 2018, the EAC expanded efforts to encourage residents to use the Recycle Coach web and mobile app. Recycle Coach provides geographic-specific answers on curbside, dropoff, traditional, and non-traditional recycling programs, in addition to customized optional reminders of collection days, hazardous waste collection events, and more.

The mobile app is available free of charge to all community residents on Android or Apple smartphones. The web version of the app is available at [RecycleBN.org](http://RecycleBN.org) and can be accessed on any computer browser.

EAC staff continue to monitor and update the app to reflect local recycling programs in McLean County. Recycle Coach helps reduce “wishful recycling” behaviors that contaminate the recycling stream with up-to-date information on local recycling programs conveniently located right at your fingertips.

After a successful launch in 2017, use of the Recycle Coach app continues to grow in 2018.



1,319  
subscribers

13,146  
total users

54,300  
interactions

# COUNTY RECYCLING RATE

As the community’s solid waste agency, the EAC annually collects waste and recycling data to calculate the amount of municipal solid waste generated and recycled for all of McLean County. The information gathered serves as a lagging performance indicator of the success of outreach programs on waste generation and recycling. The performance indicator is limited but does help guide the EAC’s efforts to improve the county’s recycling rate and increase source reduction.

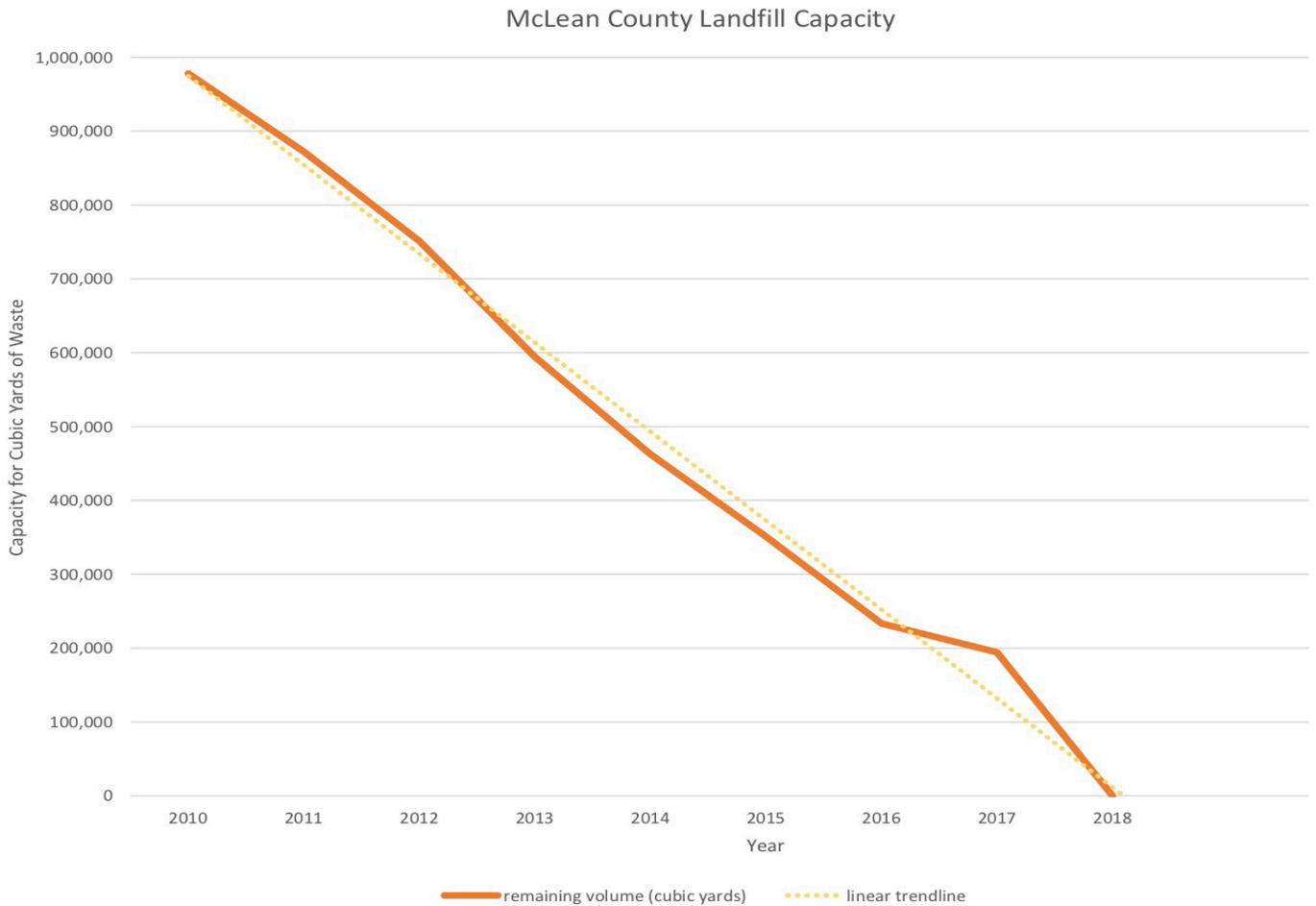
Despite an increase in waste generated, McLean County’s recycling rate increased for the third year in a row in 2017. The EAC’s annual calculation showed that the county reached a recycling rate of nearly 42% with an increase of just over 1% from 2016. As a result, the county maintained progress made in 2016 in breaking the 40% community-wide recycling goal set in 2007 but is still a significant distance from the new community-wide recycling rate goal of 50%. Minor fluctuations across the board in all material streams resulted in a relatively minor, but still positive, change to the overall community-wide recycling rate for calendar year 2017. No single category of recyclable materials saw significant fluctuations from the year prior.

The McLean County Landfill closed in 2018, and the EAC is focusing on new waste management priorities outlined in the recently approved *Twenty-Year Materials Recovery and Resource Management Plan for McLean County, Bloomington, and Normal, Illinois*.

## McLean County Waste Generation and Recycling Rates: 2013-2017

	2013	2014	2015*	2016*	2017
<b>Total MSW Recycled (tons)</b>	73,833	85,196	81,302	83,335	88,459
<b>Total MSW Landfilled (tons)</b>	121,991	141,068	154,662	120,815	124,364
<b>Total Municipal Solid Waste Generated (tons)</b>	195,824	226,264	235,964	204,150	211,230
<b>Percent Change from Previous Year</b>	6.96%	15.54%	4.29%	-13.48%	3.47%
<b>Recycling Rate</b>	37.70%	37.65%	34.46%	40.82%	41.88%
<b>Percent Change from Previous Year</b>	3.43%	-0.13%	-8.49%	18.47%	2.59%

\* Updated numbers due to corrected information from waste/recycling haulers.



## LANDFILL CLOSURE

On September 30, 2018, Republic Services announced the closure of the McLean County Landfill, which was anticipated for nearly 10 years. The McLean County Transfer Station, which accepts non-hazardous solid waste for landfilling, remains in operation with no changes in the current services offered.

Going forward, municipal solid waste collected at the transfer station is now landfilled at the Livingston County Landfill outside of Pontiac. The Livingston County landfill has an estimated 50 years of capacity remaining. The City of Bloomington and the Town of Normal are under a 2014 agreement with Republic Services for waste disposal with a set price schedule that adjusts annually. This agreement is automatically renewed on an annual basis through 2021.

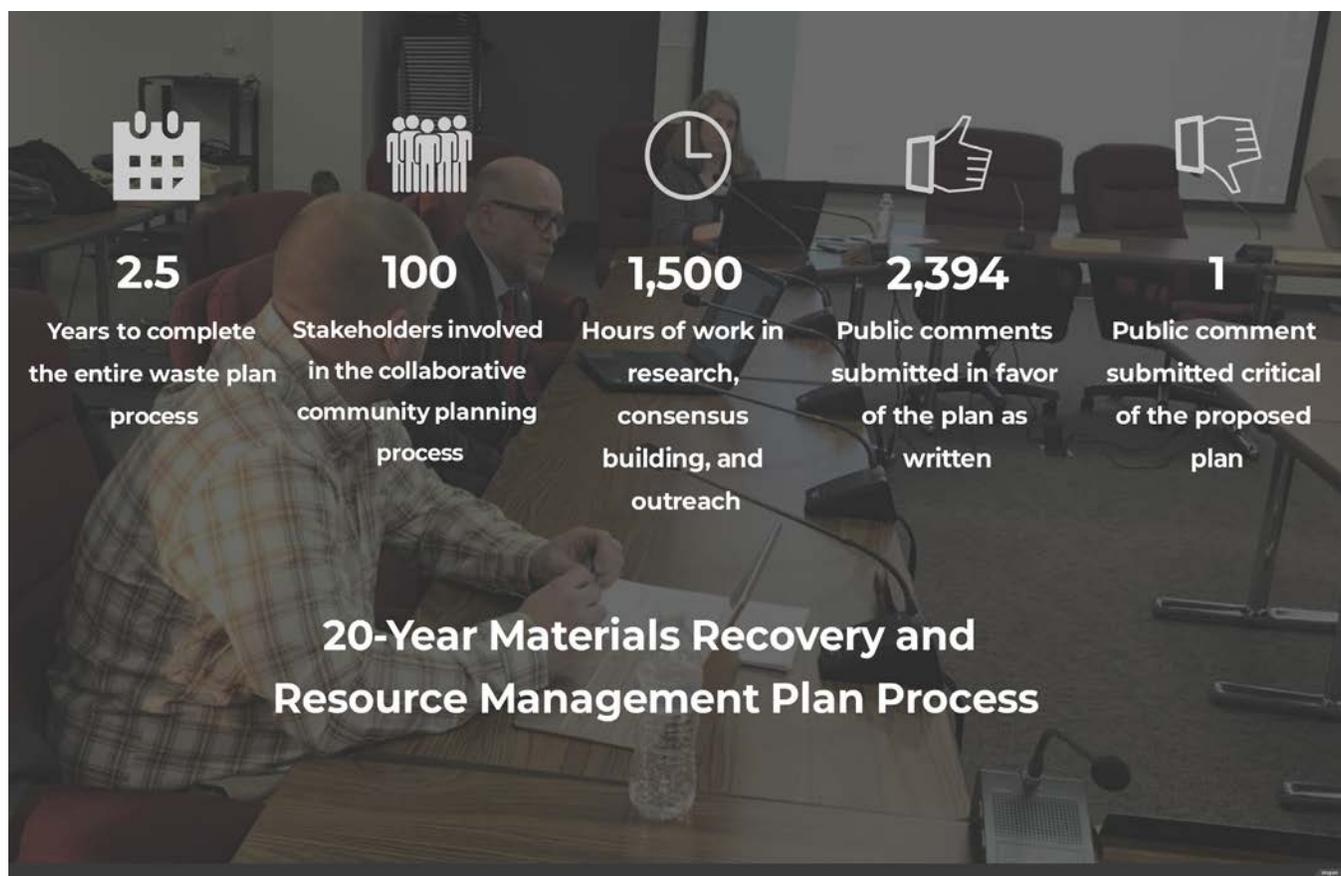
While landfill capacity in central Illinois remains high, the new Twenty-Year Materials Recovery and Resource Management Plan for McLean County, Bloomington, and Normal, Illinois builds upon decades of successful recycling programs to divert more from the landfill for economic benefit where possible instead of shipping it further away for landfilling.

# TWENTY-YEAR SOLID WASTE PLAN

In late February of 2018, the Ecology Action Center received the final local approval needed for the new *Twenty-Year Materials Recovery and Resource Management Plan for McLean County, Bloomington, and Normal, Illinois*. The approval of this document by the Bloomington City Council, Normal Town Council, and McLean County Board was the culmination of two and half years of hard work by more than 100 people directly involved as stakeholders or focus group members.

The development of a new community solid waste management plan was proposed by the Ecology Action Center in light of significant changes since the approval of the original McLean County Solid Waste Management Plan in 1992. These changes included the following:

- Rapidly shrinking capacity in the McLean County Landfill, which was anticipated to close in 2017 or 2018
- Significant changes in recycling and waste management technologies
- Shifts in perceptions and behaviors regarding waste and recycling
- Fluctuations in recycled commodity markets



Six priorities were identified and proposed through the collaborative stakeholder planning process. These priorities are based upon existing needs or waste streams in McLean County that are insufficiently addressed through existing services or programs. These six priorities, combined with automatic increases in the community-wide recycling rate goal every five years, comprise the new 20-year solid waste plan.



**Top six new waste management priorities:**

1. Commercial recycling
2. Construction and demolition recycling
3. Multifamily recycling
4. Food waste recycling
5. Permanent household hazardous waste facility
6. Increased outreach and technical assistance

The approval process of the new plan drew media attention as some elected officials expressed concerns over the inclusion of regulatory approaches among possible future strategies for certain waste streams. Ultimately 2,394 residents voiced support for the plan as written through the public comment process; only one resident voiced opposition.

# IPCF RECYCLING PROGRAMS

In waste management circles, it is commonly understood that reducing the barriers to recycling increases participation. In April, the Ecology Action Center received full funding for a recycling initiative to address existing gaps in waste recovery services in the community.

The Ecology Action Center used funding awarded through an Illinois Prairie Community Foundation Grant (IPCF Green Endowment) to increase recycling by reducing economic and physical barriers to active participation. Through the “Reducing Barriers to Sustainable Recycling” program, the EAC provided increased recycling options in both Bloomington and Normal with the help of cash-match donations by both the City of Bloomington and Town of Normal.

In Normal, financial barriers were preventing some low-income households from participating in the existing single-stream curbside program in Normal. Through this new program, low-income households were encouraged to apply with the EAC for a free recycling cart. By the end of 2018, the EAC distributed thirty-nine 65-gallon carts to qualifying households. Participating households also received educational content about the various recycling options in McLean County, and the EAC worked with them to track their weekly recycling behaviors and attitudes on recycling.

In Bloomington, the EAC utilized grant funding to increase recycling access in the public downtown area, installing four permanent recycling receptacles on the corners of the McLean County History Museum square. Permanent receptacles in a high pedestrian traffic area provide increased recycling accessibility to residents and visitors alike. This includes, but is not limited to, those attending the Downtown Bloomington Farmers’ Market and other seasonal events throughout the year.

Combined, these events drew nearly 90,000 visitors in 2018. By the end of 2018, these four receptacles diverted over 1,800 pounds of waste from the landfill.



In September, EAC leveraged the installation of receptacles on the museum square to secure four additional permanent recycling receptacles for the downtown Bloomington area through donations by Midwest Fiber, Henson Disposal & Recycling, Area Disposal, and Republic Services.

# WASTE COLLECTION EVENTS

## MEGA recycling at ISLWE

In conjunction with the Illinois Sustainable Living and Wellness Expo in early April, the EAC held a MEGA Recycling event outside of the venue at Illinois Wesleyan University. Seventeen volunteers along with EAC staff helped 215 households recycle non-traditional recyclables at a convenient one-stop location.

Community partners, including Home Sweet Home Ministries, the Normal Lions Club, Midwest Fiber/C.O.P.S., Books to Benefit, and Kern Mattress Outlet, were on site to accept various items.

Over 2,900 pounds of non-traditional recyclables were collected at the MEGA Recycling drop-off, including: electronics, scrap metal, textiles, string lights, packing material, books, cellphones, and mattresses. In addition, 300 pounds of traditional recyclables, 27,300 pounds of shredded paper, and 310 pounds of food waste was collected to be recycled and composted by Midwest Fiber.





## Sugar Creek clean-up

The EAC coordinated the annual Constitutional Trail and Sugar Creek clean-up event in late April, in conjunction with Earth Day.

Eighty-five volunteers along with EAC staff cleaned up a 1.6-mile stretch of the Constitution Trail and Sugar Creek from Tipton Park to the Audubon Gardens near Vernon Avenue. We removed nearly 1,000 pounds of trash in one day.

This waste collection event not only helps keep our local landscape clear of pollution, but also improves the health and vitality of Sugar Creek as a major water resource in our community with the removal of litter directly from Sugar Creek and along its banks which act as a natural buffer zone for the area.



**85**

volunteers



**1.6**

miles of  
Constitution Trail  
and Sugar Creek



**1,000**

pounds of trash  
removed in one day

## Bruegala

In 2018, the EAC collaborated for the first time with the Bloomington-Normal Jaycees to coordinate a large-scale recycling initiative at the 19th annual Bruegala Beer Festival at the Corn Crib in Normal.

Twenty-five volunteers and five EAC staff members worked over the two-day event and diverted 3,962 total pounds of recyclable material from the landfill. The recycled materials included glass bottles, metal cans, and cardboard boxes. Volunteers and staff spent over 120 hours of time recycling.



## Sweet Corn Blues Festival

EAC staff returned to the Sweet Corn Blues Festival in August to spread awareness about composting and waste reduction. With compost carts provided by Midwest Fiber, the EAC facilitated a “reduce waste station” where attendees could compost corncobs, paper trays, napkins, and any other type of food waste. Attendees had the opportunity to drop off recyclable items at the waste station as well.

At this year’s event, EAC staff and volunteers were able to collect and divert 416 pounds of compostable materials from the landfill.



# CLEAN WATER

The Ecology Action Center educates the community about the negative impacts of storm water runoff pollution and provides information and resources to help people reduce their contributions to water pollution.

The EAC promotes clean water protection and watershed awareness through education and outreach programs including the Yard Smart program, storm drain stenciling, the mCLEANwater.org watershed clearinghouse website, rain barrel workshops, an annual creek and trail clean-up event, the Sugar Creek Stewards, septic system maintenance messaging, and reminding our community to curb their leaves in the fall.

# YARD SMART

The Ecology Action Center's Yard Smart program is an effort to promote healthy and sustainable yard and garden practices to reduce the use of synthetic pesticides, conserve natural resources, and encourage wildlife habitat. The EAC educates community members, who can volunteer to become Yard Smart, on lawn care principles that are safe for children, pets, and the environment.

The EAC hosted its 16th annual Yard Smart Garden Walk on June 23, highlighting community gardens that exhibit Yard Smart practices. The theme this year was rain water catchment and plant diversity for pollinators. The walk featured home gardens of Bob Monier, Alan and Cindy Langrall, and Susan and Stephen Kosman who all have very diverse gardens with lots of space for wildlife. We also featured the First Presbyterian Church on the tour because they solved a serious rain water runoff problem from the church's steep roof by creating a beautiful and functional rain garden along the perimeter of the church.

We had 55 participants in the walk this year, which ended with lunch and a presentation about native pollinator health by Dr. Ben Sadd from the Illinois State University Department of Biological Sciences.



# SUGAR CREEK STEWARDS



The Sugar Creek Stewards project is part of the Ecology Action Center's Clean Water Program and is conducted with support from the Town of Normal and the City of Bloomington.

The aim of the project is to improve the function and aesthetics of stream buffers while also raising awareness about the benefits of Sugar Creek as valuable habitat for native wildlife and plants in our community.

We hold workdays on the third Saturday of every month where we work with volunteers to improve storm water filtration by removing and managing exotic and invasive species. The EAC teaches volunteers about riparian habitats, how to identify targeted invasive species, and to identify and promote important native species. The EAC switches between worksites in Normal and Bloomington identified by Town and City staff as problem areas.

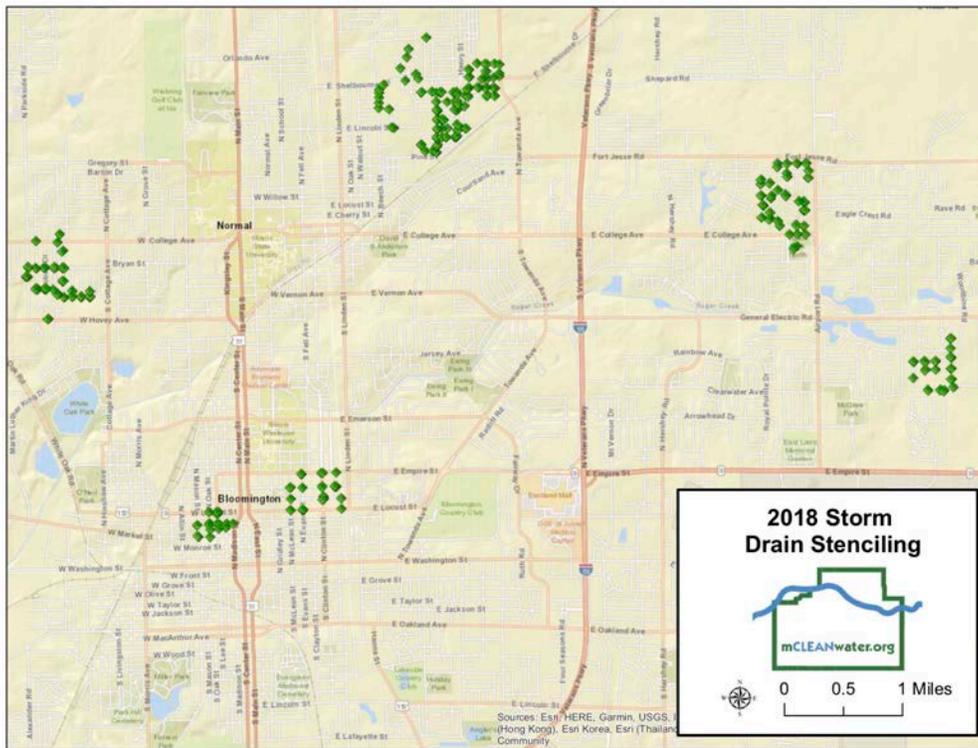
In 2018, we worked with a total of 95 volunteers along Sugar Creek through Fairview Park and near Heather Ridge in Normal, and near Tipton Trails (at the intersection of GE Road and Hershey) and through Ewing Park II and III in Bloomington. We cleared large quantities of honeysuckle, willow, and deseeded teasel to prevent spread. We also planted 8,000 square feet of native seed at Ewing, Fairview, and along the creek near Tipton Park, along with 40 liatris corms near Tipton. Their addition will not only improve the aesthetics of those areas along the creek, but the deep root systems of the native plants will help reduce erosion on the creek bed and the plants will be a source of food and shelter for insects, birds, and other small animals.

# RAIN BARREL WORKSHOPS

The EAC held six rain barrel workshops where attendees built their own rain barrels to take home. Workshops also included an educational presentation about storm water runoff pollution and prevention, and rain barrel best-use practices. Thirty rain barrels were constructed during the workshops.



# STORM DRAIN STENCILING

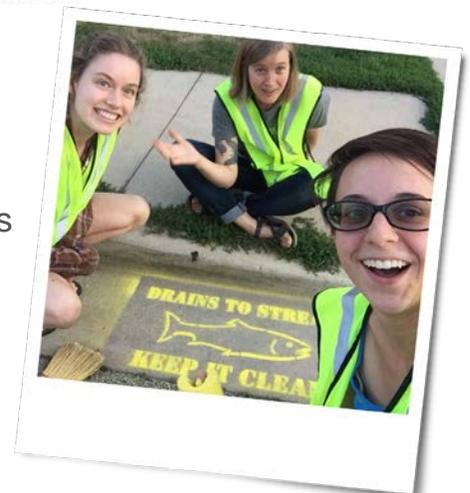


2018 Ecology Action Center

The EAC's storm water efforts aim to educate McLean County residents about the sources of harmful nonpoint source water pollution. One of the ways we share this message is through volunteer-based storm drain stenciling. Groups of volunteers work in designated neighborhoods where they spray paint "Drains to Stream, Keep it Clean" reminders near storm drains.

The EAC tracks all the areas we stencil through a global positioning system (GPS) marker and a geographic information system (GIS) mapping tool.

The volunteers also distribute information to the residences in the neighborhood explaining how leaves, litter, pesticides, fertilizers, and other lawn chemicals wash into our waterways after rainfall or snowmelt, and contribute to pollution. The information also highlights ways that residents can decrease their contribution to storm water pollution.



This year we had 60 volunteers participate including Heartland Community College students, Illinois Wesleyan University Environmental Health students, the Paul Mitchell Green Team, and employees from Common Ground Grocery Store and Keller Williams Realty Company. These volunteers stenciled 325 storm drains and distributed information to 1,308 homes in Bloomington and Normal.



BNenergyBright.org



BN Energy Bright is a community energy program designed to increase energy efficiency for homes and businesses in Bloomington-Normal through professional low-cost energy assessments, personalized assessment reports for participants, and through a variety of educational information in the form of presentations, outreach events, and a comprehensive website.

BN Energy Bright is in partnership with the Town of Normal and the City of Bloomington, in conjunction with their municipal aggregation program, to help further reduce the community's overall energy demand.

In 2018, we completed 37 home energy audits in Bloomington and Normal, reflecting a 42% increase from 2017. Five households also took advantage of the additional blower door air leak testing. We also conducted two energy audits

in McLean County as part of our Solar Bloomington-Normal program. Since the county is outside of the program area, these audits were funded through a private sponsorship from First Allied Securities to allow the EAC to expand energy audit services to county residents participating in the solar group-buy program.

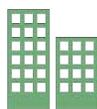
Implementation of audit report suggestions can save residents \$700 annually on average per household based on Department of Energy savings estimates. Cumulatively, in 2018, participating households saved as much as \$25,000 in energy savings.

We completed four small business energy audits including the Moses Montefiore Temple, First United Methodist Church, Recycling Furniture for Families, and the West Bloomington Revitalization Project building.



**37**

home energy audits



**4**

small business energy audits



**\$700**

estimated annual savings per household



**5,000**

people reached through presentations, events, and phone inquiries



**500,000**

people reached through media coverage, ads, social media, and the EAC website

# SOLAR BLOOMINGTON-NORMAL

The EAC leverages its energy efficiency program and expertise to create partnerships that expand energy efficiency and renewable energy services to the community. The EAC partnered with the Midwest Renewable Energy Association to run a second solar group-buy program in Bloomington-Normal in 2018

Solar Bloomington-Normal is designed to increase education in communities about solar photovoltaics (PV), and increase market penetration of residential and small commercial solar PV through a group purchasing program. These programs work by aggregating demand for solar in small geographic areas, achieving economies of scale. The costs for solar through these programs is lowered because we provide up-front customer education, leading to a higher-than-average conversion rate for solar leads.

The EAC worked with MREA and a local advisory committee comprised of representatives from the Town of Normal, City of Bloomington, local businesses and residents experienced with solar to select an installer from a competitive proposal process.

The committee selected StraightUp Solar for the program who was also the installer for the 2016 program. EAC and StraightUp Solar staff led 23 presentations throughout the community about the benefits of solar energy, including details about the group-buy program, pricing, and available incentives. The presentation also informed participants about the BN Energy Bright program and the importance of energy efficiency. The program reached 223 people, and as a result, 30 new installations (25 residences, 3 businesses, and 2 places of worship) totaling over 430 kilowatts.



**430.12 kW**

total new solar capacity



**540,407**

estimated energy production in the first year (kwh)



**\$46,344**

estimated total utility bill savings during the first year



**850,765**

estimated total carbon dioxide emissions offset during the first year (lbs)

# GREENHOUSE GAS INVENTORY

## Climate change and air quality

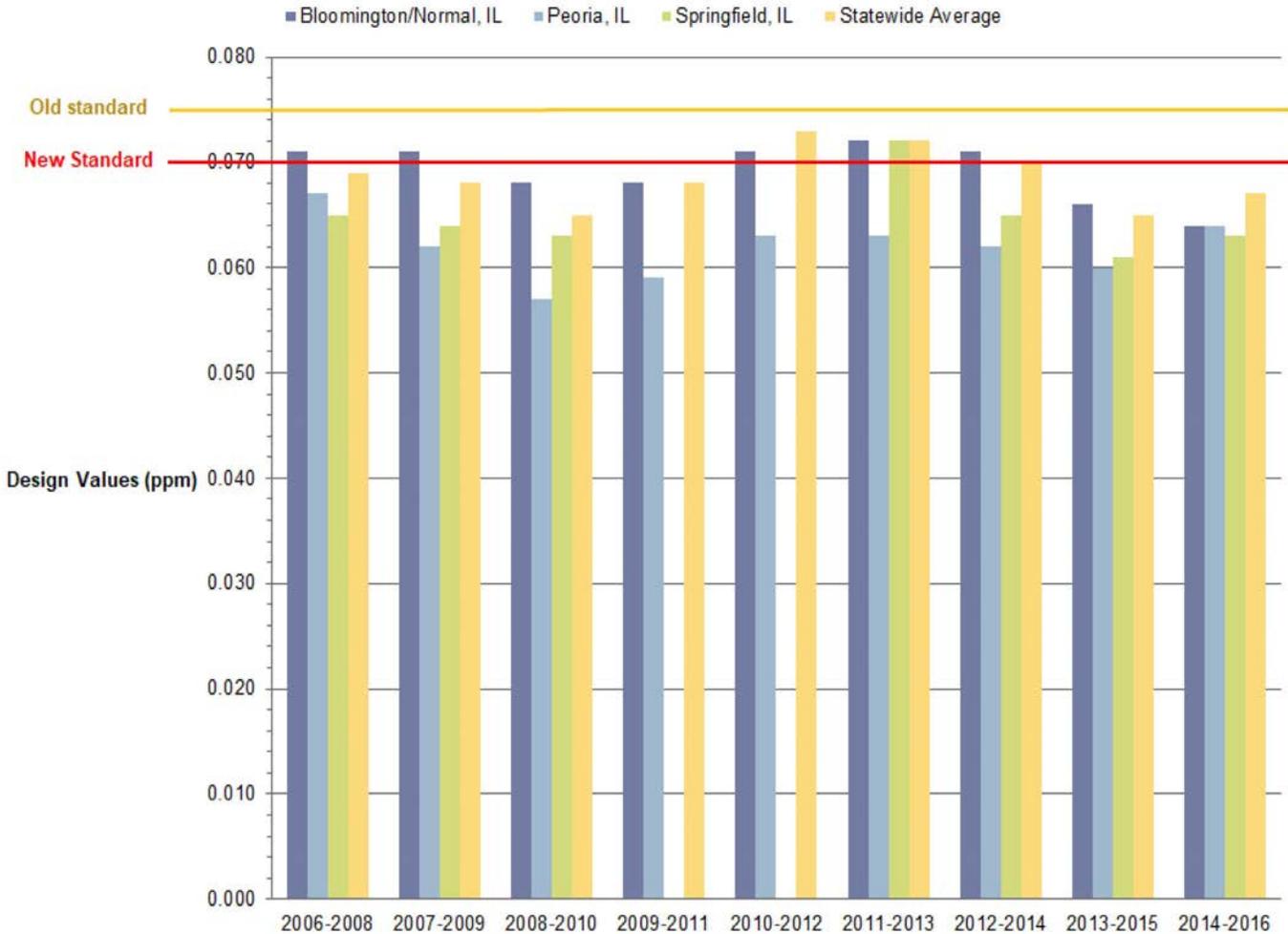
In 2014, the Ecology Action Center completed its first-ever baseline inventory of local greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions for the Bloomington-Normal community using data from 2008. Building upon that effort, the EAC is working to complete a GHG emissions update, using 2015 data to assess changes that have occurred since the baseline inventory.

This current emissions update also takes into consideration other air quality emissions, specifically ozone. Our area is currently classified as an attainment area for all six categories of criteria air pollutants. This means that local concentrations of pollutants are currently below the levels established by the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). However, we have exceeded the new ozone standard five times since 2006 and could be at risk of doing so again; the financial cost of nonattainment is significant and can include loss of federal transportation funding and mandatory vehicle emissions testing among other ramifications. These impacts are also in addition to the public health ramifications — ozone can damage the lungs, causing chest pain, coughing, and shortness of breath while also exacerbating chronic respiratory diseases such as asthma.

Conducting regular greenhouse gas emission inventories allows our community to be better informed about its energy use and resulting impact on air quality. Greenhouse gas emissions inventories allow the Bloomington-Normal community to monitor its contribution to climate change and they serve as a guide to develop cost-effective strategies for reducing climate-changing greenhouse gases, conserving energy, saving money, and preserving valuable natural resources. These GHG emission inventories will also serve as a foundational component of the Bloomington-Normal Community Energy Strategic Plan, a road map for achieving short- and long-term community air quality and energy use goals.

Our preliminary findings show that between 2008 and 2015, Town of Normal and City of Bloomington LGO emissions increased by 10% and 12% respectively. Community-scale emissions fell by 4%. The leading source of greenhouse gas emissions in Bloomington-Normal in 2015 was stationary energy usage, which includes electricity and natural gas used for cooling, heating, and other needs in homes, businesses, industry, and local government. On-road vehicular transportation, the next leading source of greenhouse gas emissions, includes all gasoline and diesel usage in local transportation.

## Bloomington-Normal Ozone Design Values



The trend of decreased stationary emissions and increased transportation emissions is consistent with national trends — transportation is now the single largest source of GHG emissions nationwide. Stationary emissions are decreasing due to increased use of natural gas for electricity generation because of depressed natural gas prices.

Addressing climate change is a high priority for the Ecology Action Center and our community. Significant reports on the national and international levels released in 2018 demonstrate the urgent need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions globally. Due to inaction on the national level, most progress on these issues needs to be made on the local or state level.



## ILLINOIS SUSTAINABLE LIVING & WELLNESS EXPO

The Ecology Action Center and the Illinois Wesleyan University Wellness Program hosted the Illinois Sustainable Living and Wellness Expo on April 7, 2018. The expo highlighted the individuals and organizations in Illinois working to make our state and local community a healthier, more environmentally sustainable place to live. Around 1,500 attendees came to learn from and interact with 80 different exhibitors sharing information ranging from energy efficiency, renewable energy, local food, cycling, and various DIY hobbies to wellness testing and massage.

This year's expo featured a panel discussion with Shannon Fulton of StraightUp Solar, Drake Zimmerman with the McLean County Zoning Board, and Peter Millburg with Ameren Illinois, hosted by and aired on WGLT, about the impacts of large-scale solar for our community, our farmers, and the grid.

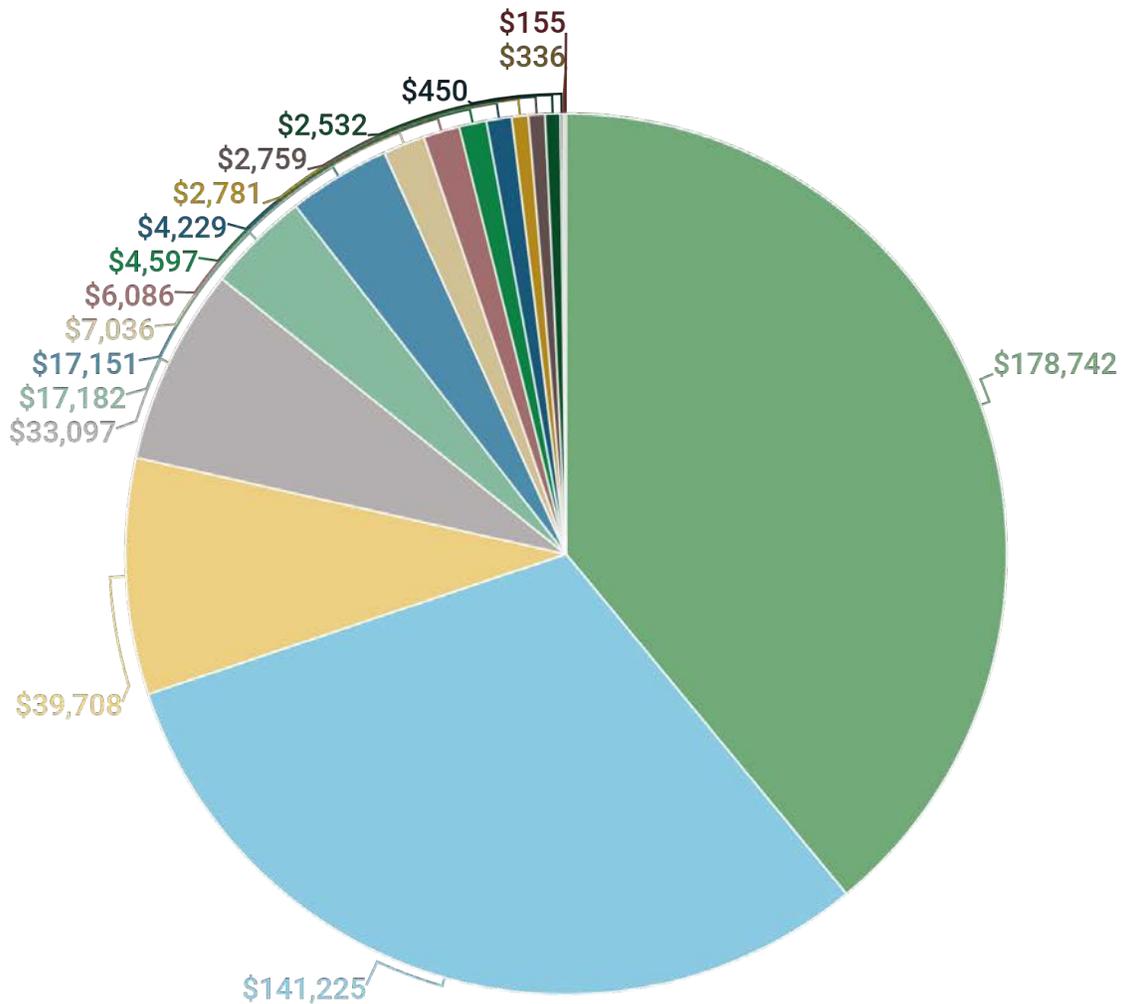




Along with visiting and learning from our many exhibitors, attendees could enjoy lunch from local food trucks The Dinner Bell and Oogies Food on Wheels, listen to live music from local artists like Stone & Snow and Hot Sauce Universe, watch a cooking demonstration by Chad Sanders, get a bike safety check from the West Bloomington Revitalization Project Bike Co-op, free rides to and from the Expo from Connect Transit, and enjoy a nice cup of coffee from the Coffee Hound!

The Expo also featured drive-thru MEGA Recycling outside where our partners like Home Sweet Home Ministries, the Lion's Club, Terracycle, and more collected non-traditional recyclables at our one-stop drop!

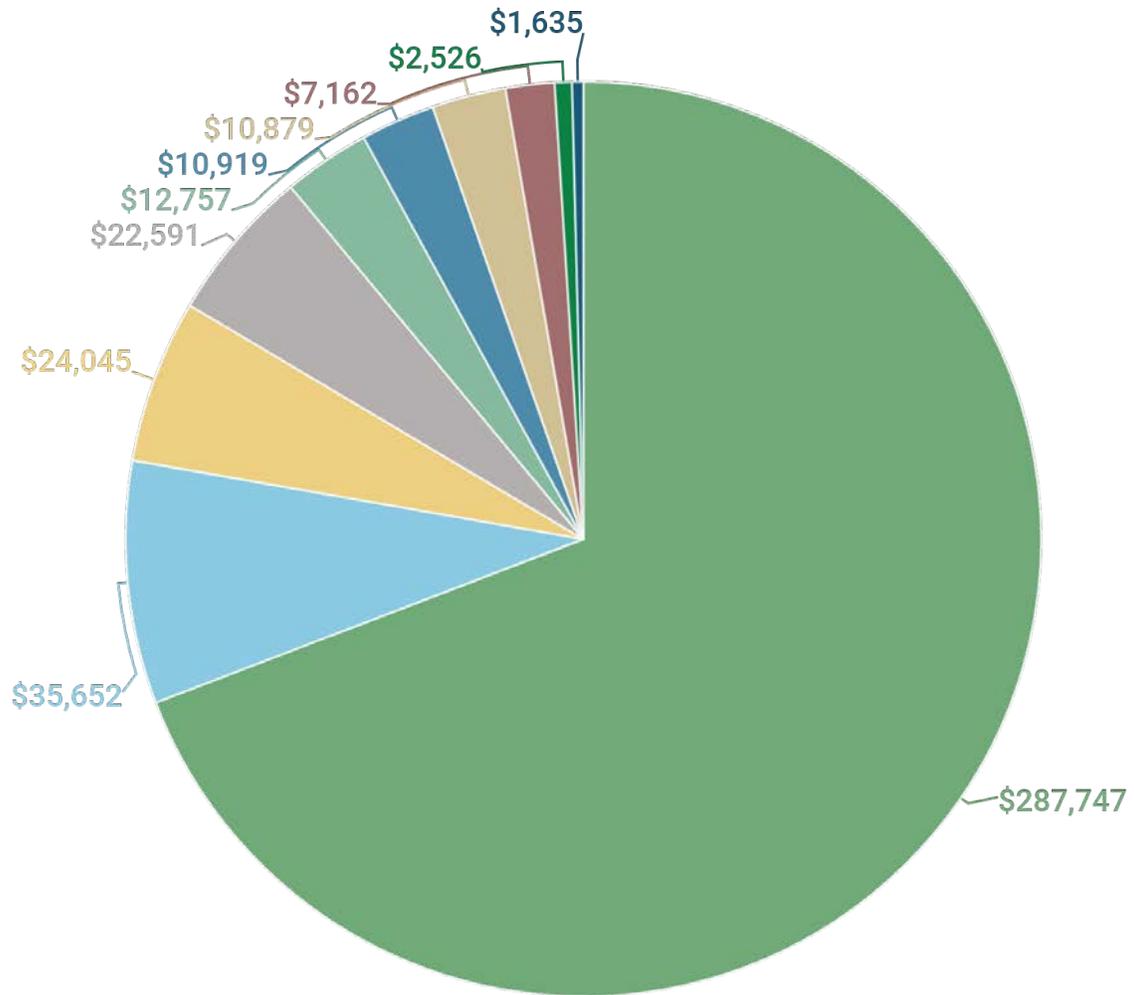
# 2018 FINANCIAL SUMMARY: EXPENSES



- Salaries & Wages   ● Fees for Services   ● Office Expenses
- Advertising & Promotion   ● Payroll Taxes   ● Supplies   ● Depreciation
- Insurance   ● Dues & Subscriptions   ● Occupancy   ● Miscellaneous
- Employee Benefits   ● Conferences   ● Intern Expense   ● Amortization
- Recycling Expense

Total expenses for 2018: \$458,066

# 2018 FINANCIAL SUMMARY: REVENUE



- Contract Fees
  Contributions
  Sponsorships
  Membership Dues
- Grant Income
  Fundraising Events
  Miscellaneous Income
- Program Fees
  Investment Return
  Merchandise Sales

Total revenue for 2018: \$415,913

# 2018 FUNDERS & SPONSORS

## Public Agencies

- Bloomington-Normal Water Reclamation District
- Bloomington Township
- City of Bloomington
- Connect Transit
- Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
- Illinois State University
- McLean County
- McLean County Regional Planning Commission
- Town of Normal
- University of Illinois Extension Local Foods and Small Farms Program
- WGLT

## Business & Private Supporters

- Accent Nature
- Area Disposal
- Destihl Brewery
- Epiphany Farms
- GreenTop Grocery
- Heartland Bank and Trust Company
- Henson Disposal
- John & Marilyn Freese
- Keg Grove Brewery
- Matt Fraker & Sherrie Thornton
- Midwest Fiber
- Paul E & Kathy Packard
- PrairiErth Farm
- Reality on Monroe
- Republic Services
- Rivian Automotive
- SharePower Responsible Investing
- Sitka Salmon LLC
- Stave Wine Bar
- Straight Up Solar
- Twin City Wood Recycling
- Zimmerman & Armstrong

## Non-profit Sponsors & Partners

- Bike BloNo
- Bloomington-Normal Jaycees
- Bloomington-Normal Junior Women's Club
- Friends of the Trail
- Habitat For Humanity
- Home Sweet Home Ministries
- Illinois Counties Solid Waste Management Agency
- Illinois Environmental Council
- Illinois Prairie Community Foundation
- Illinois Prairie Wild Ones
- Illinois Product Stewardship Council
- Illinois Wesleyan University
- ISU Student Environmental Action Coalition
- IWU Student Sierra Coalition
- McLean County Arts Center
- McLean County Wheelers
- Mid Central Community Action
- Midwest Renewable Energy Association
- ParkLands Foundation
- Paul Mitchell School
- Sierra Club Illinois
- YWCA McLean County

# ECOLOGY ACTION CENTER STAFF



**Michael Brown**  
Executive Director



**Larissa Armstrong**  
Assistant Director



**Molly McCready**  
Education Coordinator



**Eric Marshall**  
Stewardship Coordinator



**Gary Kamplain**  
Program Assistant



**Sara Keene**  
Program Coordinator



**Angela Bossard**  
Administrative Assistant

## 2018-2019 Board of Directors

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 Carl Teichman | Vice President  
 Nancy Armstrong | Past President  
 Kari Sandhaas | Treasurer  
 Charles Bristow | Secretary  
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Ben Ryburn | Ex-Officio Bloomington  
 George Gordon | Ex-Officio McLean County  
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## Contact Us

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**ECOLOGY**  
 ACTION CENTER

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