



ECOLOGY NEWS

ACTION CENTER

Volume 14, Issue 1

Spring 2016

BN Green Events

April 2 - April 16

BN Spring Clean Up
BNcleanUp.org

April 9, 9 am - 4 pm

Illinois Sustainable Living & Wellness Expo
islwe.org

April 9, 9 am - 12 pm

Mega Recycling Event
islwe.org

April 13, 5:30 pm

Rain Barrel Workshop
ecologyactioncenter.org

April 16, 9 am - 3 pm

Constitution Trail/Sugar Creek Clean Up
ecologyactioncenter.org

April 22

Earth Day

April 23, 9 am

Rain Barrel Workshop
ecologyactioncenter.org

May 11, 5:30 pm

Rain Barrel Workshop
ecologyactioncenter.org

May 28, 9 am

Rain Barrel Workshop
ecologyactioncenter.org

June 25, 9 am - 12 pm

Yard Smart Garden Walk
ecologyactioncenter.org

Illinois Sustainable Living & Wellness Expo

Central Illinois' premier green event, the Illinois Sustainable Living and Wellness Expo, will return on Saturday, April 9 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Illinois Wesleyan University Shirk Center. At this event, you will discover a diversity of exhibitors and presenters that provide resources and services about this year's theme of "Sustainable Science and Industry." Entry is FREE and everyone is welcome, so stop on by this year's Expo for some fun for the whole family.

Here are some things you can expect to find at Expo 2016:

- Many Exhibitors ranging from local health resources, fair trade goods, local food, energy efficiency, services and products focused on living green and much more!
- Enjoy our theme of Sustainable Science and Industry with multiple workshops, including Climate Change Panel Discussion moderated by WGLT's Mike McCurdy, a presentation on "green chemistry" by IWU professor Ram Mohan, and a "Solar Power Hour" informational presentation.
- Sustainable commuting to the event is encouraged! Enjoy Free Secured Valet bicycle parking by Friends of the Constitution Trail, Free bike tune-ups by Walk-In Bike-Out, and Free Bus Rides to/from the ISLWE provided by Connect Transit. Visit the islwe.org for more details and download a free ride voucher!
- Be a kid and bring the kids! The expo is filled with educational activities, including the ever-popular Alpacas, a rock climbing wall, and the Children's Discovery Museum!

The Illinois Sustainable Living and Wellness Expo is a unique chance to explore a wide range of products and services that will enhance your lifestyle and your surroundings, all under one roof! The Expo is **free of charge**, so come take advantage of this event that only comes once a year! We hope to see you on **April 9** at the IWU Shirk Center!

Terracycle

*Terracycle is a specialized recycling program. Here are a few of the things being collected at the Mega Recycling event:

- Toothpaste tubes
- Wine corks
- Personal Care/ Makeup Packaging
- Drink pouches
- Dried-up markers and pens
- Granola bar wrappers
- GoGo Squeeze pouches
- Plastic tape dispensers
- Solo #6 plastic cups
- Brita products and filters

Note: *This list is subject to change. For the most up-to-date list, please check the EAC website.*

Mega Recycling at the ISLWE

The Ecology Action Center with partners Home Sweet Home Ministries, Midwest Fiber, the Lions Club and Bloomington-Normal Terracycle will once again offer one-stop drop off for recycling the morning of the Expo. Recycling will be available from 9-noon. Accepted items include:

- Electronics
- Textiles – wearable or not
- Eyeglasses
- Hearing Aids
- Keys
- Christmas lights
- Corrugated plastic yard signs (such as campaign signs)
- Terracycle*
- Documents for shredding

NOTE: Some items we could previously collect at MEGA Recycling are no longer accepted—no batteries or CFL lightbulbs, plastic garden pots, or tube-style TVs. And as always, no Household Hazardous materials – including paint, stains, chemicals of any kind. Consult our website or call us at 309-454-3169 for information on these other wastes.

Solar Bloomington—Normal

The EAC is happy to announce an exciting opportunity for Bloomington-Normal and McLean County residents to participate in a solar group buy program! The Ecology Action Center (EAC) is working with the Midwest Renewable Energy Association (MREA) as part of their Grow Solar initiative to expand solar markets throughout the Midwest. We're replicating the successful Solar Urbana Campaign program here in our community.

Through the group buy method, Solar Bloomington-Normal achieves a price per watt lower than any individual would likely be able to get on the market.



In order to educate the community about the program and help people determine whether or not solar is right for their home or business, The Ecology Action Center will be hosting a series of Solar Power Hours around the community. We'll go over the basics of solar, market trends, financials, how to tell if your site is ready for solar, and how to participate in the Solar Bloomington-Normal program. Getting well-informed participants to the table saves the installer hours and hours of marketing and education they would otherwise have to do themselves, and in turn saves you money.

The official kick-off Power Hour will be at the Illinois Sustainable Living and Wellness Expo on April 9. There will be another shortly after on April 18 at 6pm at the Marriott.

Join us at a Power Hour and help us make Bloomington-Normal shine!

Save the Date: Yard Smart Garden Walk

Saturday, June 25

The Ecology Action Center announces its fourteenth annual Yard Smart Garden Walk on Saturday, June 25, 2016. This free tour highlights beautiful and functional yards that protect our environment while benefiting wildlife and use few or no synthetic chemicals. The event features a plant and garden tool "Freecycle" Exchange. Bring garden plants or tools to give away—everything must be free.

Participants should bring their own lawn chairs and reusable water bottles for the lunch and presentation. The lunch is a zero waste event. Participants are encouraged to carpool during the tour to conserve fossil fuels and reduce pollution.

The Yard Smart program promotes a more sustainable and healthier approach to lawn and garden maintenance. Working with nature to build a healthier ecosystem in both the soil below ground and the yard above ground will produce a more beautiful, sustainable and safer environment for everyone—children



and adults, pets and wildlife—by reducing pollutants that runoff into our local water supplies. The program encourages local homeowners to reduce the use of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides, to conserve natural resources such as water and fossil fuels, and to make room for wildlife in their yards. Yard Smart Certification recognizes local homeowners who use ecologically sustainable practices in maintaining their yards and who realize that their lawn, garden and landscaping decisions affect the health of the whole community.

More information on the Yard Smart program as well as a set of free resource fact sheets is available at yardsmart.org.

Event registration opens online at ecologyactioncenter.org in May.

Note: The memorial service for Dale Birkenholz is the afternoon of June 25; the Yard Smart Garden Walk will end early enough to allow participants also attend the memorial service.



Partner Spotlight

Native Landscaping for Wildlife & People

Illinois Prairie Wild Ones

May 9, 7 pm - 8:30 pm @
Mennonite Church of
Normal

This presentation will explain why native plants are more beneficial than non-native plants, why biodiversity is healthy, and what groups of native animals can be attracted to home landscapes with natives. Lastly, we will discuss what habitats can be created around our homes by planting certain species of wildflowers, shrubs and trees (many of which will be offered at the native plant sale on Saturday, May 21). Dave Tylka is a semi-retired Professor of Biology at St. Louis Community College and author of the book *Native Landscaping for Wildlife and People*. Light refreshments will be served after the presentation.

illinoisprairie.wildones.org

EAC Online Resources

BNenergyBright.org

Energy Efficiency information and energy audit sign up

mCLEANwater.org

Community-wide watershed clearinghouse website. Decades of reports and studies in the online library.

RadonMcLean.org

Information on health risks from Radon and how to test to make sure your home is safe.

YardSmart.org

Free downloadable fact sheets and resources for safe and responsible gardening and yard care.

Bn-green.org

The BN Green Events Calendar—upcoming workshops, presentations and other events by the EAC and other community partners.

The Evolution of the EAC: Our Roles and Our Symbol

You may have already noticed the debut of our new logo on the front page of this newsletter; you, our loyal members, are the first to see this public release. Over the course of our 40 plus year history, our role in the community has evolved significantly. However, our symbol representing that role has taken a slower path to our current position. Here's a brief look back at the subtle changes we've made over the years before arriving at our new look today.



Recycle was a grassroots effort, with community members coming together to give their time to make it happen. Our look at the time was clean and simple and reflected our mission to recycle.

Eventually, in the early 1980's, we organized as a separate nonprofit organization. With that new identity came a new logo. We began performing education and outreach in order to increase participation in recycling programs and saw our efforts as part of the broader environmental movement going on nationwide. Again, our symbol demonstrated our broadening perspective at that time.



In 1995, we opened the public facility and environmental learning center at our current location on College Avenue in Normal, which we named the Ecology Action Center. People began calling our organization by the name, instead of Operation Recycle, and in 2004, we made the name change official. By that time, the local municipalities had taken over the role of providing recycling services to the community so our work was focused on environmental education and outreach.



During this decade, the EAC really began to grow. Due to our strong track record in providing solid waste education and outreach, eventually we took on the role of the local solid waste agency, providing certain solid waste planning and coordination services for the community. We also added a clean water education and outreach program to help local governments comply with mandates related to storm water runoff pollution. With funding from Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, we added a community energy program to help local residents and businesses become more energy efficient.



In 2011, the EAC celebrated our 40th anniversary, and temporarily changed our logo to recognize the four decades of hard work by many dedicated people. At this time we recognized our early leaders while also looking towards the future as we continued to grow. In 2010 we added a Radon Awareness program with funding from the Illinois Emergency Management Agency and in late 2011 we launched the first ever fundraising campaign for a private-public partnership

for locally funded Household Hazardous Waste collection.

By the end of 2015, our last year to use our traditional logo, we have expanded our scope yet again. In the last few years we have completed the first ever baseline inventory of greenhouse gas emissions for Bloomington and Normal, we have successfully raised money for and held the second locally funded Household Hazardous Collection in our community, and also created a brand-new energy efficiency outreach program, BN Energy Bright on behalf of the City of Bloomington and Town of Normal tied to their electricity aggregation programs.

Our long-time "globe" logo served the EAC well; it symbolized our efforts for over thirty years. But looking back to our 1971 origins, a lot has changed in that time--our community, in our nation, and on our planet. And with your help, the Ecology Action Center continues to grow to meet the environmental challenges of today—and tomorrow. Our new logo reflects our contemporary role in the community and our forward-looking perspective. We have built this organization upon the hard work of the volunteers, board members, staff, financial supporters, and numerous partners over the course of forty-five years. In that time, we have grown from a small grassroots community project into an indispensable nonprofit community agency with broad-based support.



ECOLOGY
ACTION CENTER

While the new logo represents a significant shift in design, our message remains the same. We are here to help you, your family, your business, and the community to adopt more sustainable practices for the good of current and future generations. **Because local action does make a world of difference.**

Volunteer Opportunities

April 9: ISLWE & MEGA Recycling

Help us put on one of our biggest events of the year! Volunteer to help at MEGA Recycling or other needs for the Illinois Sustainable Living and Wellness Expo via the online form at islwe.org.

April 2 - 16:

BN Spring Clean Up

Take pride in your community! Join the City of Bloomington Beautification Committee, the Town of Normal, and the Ecology Action Center in sprucing up the twin cities. Sign up to help clean up a specific area or submit a public space that needs cleaning up via the online form at BNcleanUp.org.

April 16:

Trail/Creek Clean Up

Join the EAC and partners such as Bike BloNo and Friends of the Trail with their annual clean up day along a few miles of Sugar Creek and Constitution Trail. Sign up online at ecologyactioncenter.org. *Minors must be accompanied by an adult.*



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