



2019 Annual Report



ECOLOGY
ACTION CENTER



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

This past year was like many in recent years — a mixed bag of good and bad, ups and downs, progression and regression. As the designated “environmental cheerleaders” for our community, we know that we must focus on the positive as much as possible. Environmental professionals are well-known for being too good at emphasizing the doom and gloom (D&G™); furthermore, we are well aware that the D&G™ approach is generally ineffective, as it creates feelings of hopelessness instead of inspiring positive action. At the Ecology Action Center, we pride ourselves on our ability to inspire action largely through positive reinforcement; we avoid the D&G™ approach as much as possible. But what about when that’s all there is? What if there is no positive, no silver lining? What if all we have is the traditional go-to of D&G™?

Then we still strike a balance. We give you the facts and reality of what’s going on and how bad it is. But then we work to build a new reality by continuing our nearly five decades of efforts in this community to build a healthier and more sustainable environment. We don’t give up — we just turn it up a notch.

So the facts as we know them:

- We are running out of time to address climate change. If we fail as a community, state, region, nation, and world to make meaningful change in the very near future, the impacts of climate change are likely to be significant — within our lifetimes and certainly within the lifetimes of our children.
- More environmental regulations have been rolled back or weakened or ignored in the past few years than at any other time in our history. These regulations were each designed to address specific environmental problems or issues; without them, public health will begin to decline to levels not seen in decades.
- Political division is the common denominator between these two serious threats. The rift in our communities and across the nation benefits no one and yet, it continues to grow and exacerbate every other issue. It prevents meaningful communication and working together effectively to solve problems.

But there is a positive side. Our community continues to value a healthy and sustainable environment. In partnership with local government agencies, local non-profits, and the community as a whole, we continue to make progress on multiple environmental initiatives:

- This past fall at the McLean County Household Hazardous Waste Collection — for the first time since creating this overwhelmingly successful public-private partnership for locally funded HHW collection — we significantly improved the customer experience and completely did away with arduous “wait times” for residents. Through a new appointment-only system, every resident was in and out within 15 minutes and for some, it was as quick as seven minutes!
- The Ecology Action Center was one of only a handful of organizations across Illinois chosen to act as grassroots educators for the new Illinois Solar For All (ILSFA) program that was one of the outcomes of the recent Future Energy Jobs Act (FEJA). ILSFA improves access to clean renewable solar energy for low-income households and non-profit or governmental agencies serving low-income households either through reduced cost installations or community solar subscriptions.
- With the help of a large group of stakeholders, EAC has made significant progress toward the Bloomington-Normal Community Energy Strategic Plan (BNCESP), an effort building upon multiple local inventories of greenhouse gas emissions conducted by the Ecology Action Center in recent years. The BNCESP will set targets for reduction of carbon emissions and air quality pollutants, such as ozone, and will identify strategies to reach these targets.

These and many more initiatives led by the Ecology Action Center to reduce waste, protect clean water, increase energy conservation and efficiency, and improve air quality cumulatively have a big impact on our community. But we couldn't do it with your support and dedication. It is only through our collective effort that, through these challenging times, we can avoid dwelling on the D&G™ and instead continue to make progress toward a healthy and sustainable community. And the benefit of this progress is not only toward that ultimate goal, but it is also the much more needed short-term gain in hope.

To quote Desmond Tutu, “Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness.”



Michael Brown
Executive Director
(and Cheerleading Captain)





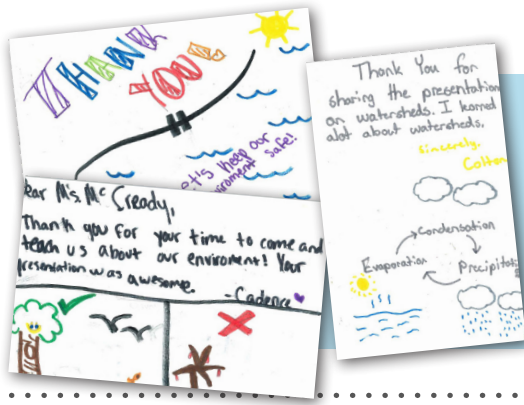
EDUCATION & OUTREACH



The Ecology Action Center provides:

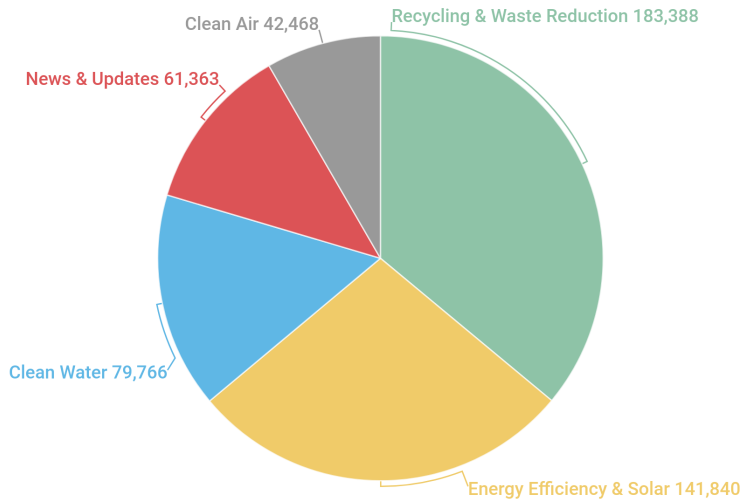
- Solid waste education to fulfill the Illinois Solid Waste Planning and Recycling Act requirements for McLean County, Bloomington, and Normal;
- Storm water education to meet the public education requirements of the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System Phase II Storm Water Management Plans 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.

IN 2019:

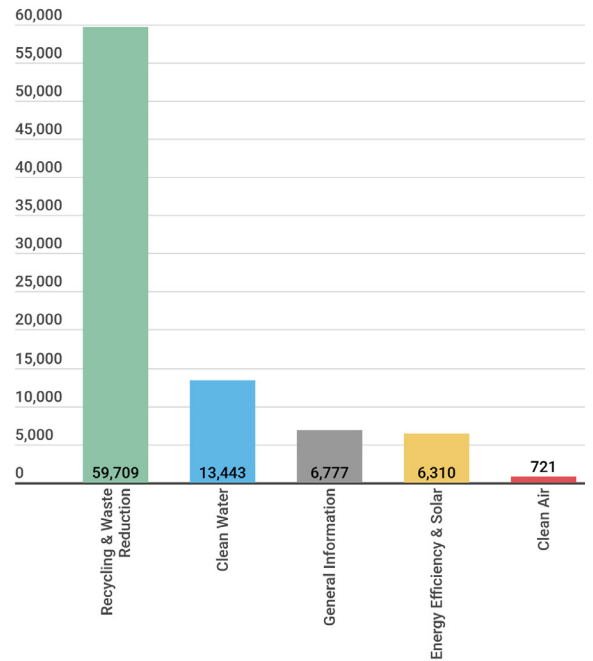


EAC staff held 140 youth programs, reaching 3,398 children. Of the youth programs, 81 covered recycling and waste reduction, and 55 on clean water.

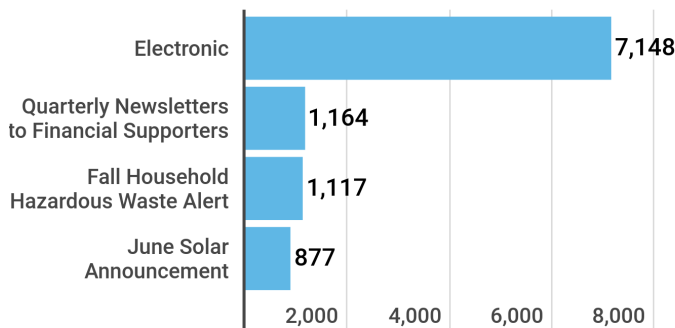
EAC Facebook and Twitter pages had 508,825 interactions



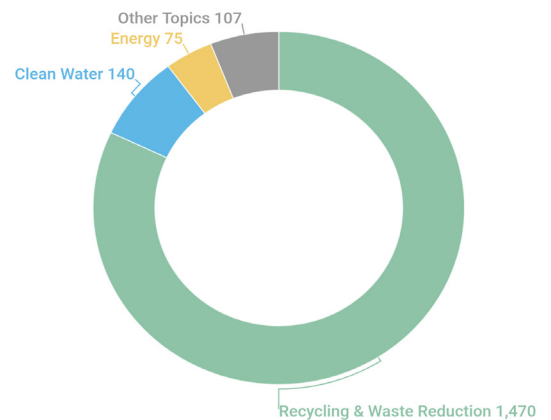
EAC websites had 86,960 total visits



Electronic and paper newsletters had a total reach of 10,306



1,792 inquiries were answered by phone, email, and in person





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 also assist at events to actively help reduce waste.

During the Sugar Creek Arts Festival, we collaborated with the McLean County Art Center to provide reusable water bottles and free ice-cold refills to all the artists, and festival attendees were welcome to refill their water bottles at our tent!

Midwest Fiber provided us with large compost carts to use at the Sweet Corn Circus. We collected corncobs, paper trays, used napkins, and any other food waste to compost! At this year's event, we helped attendees fill nine 95-gallon carts full of food waste, diverting over 500 pounds of compostable material from the landfill.

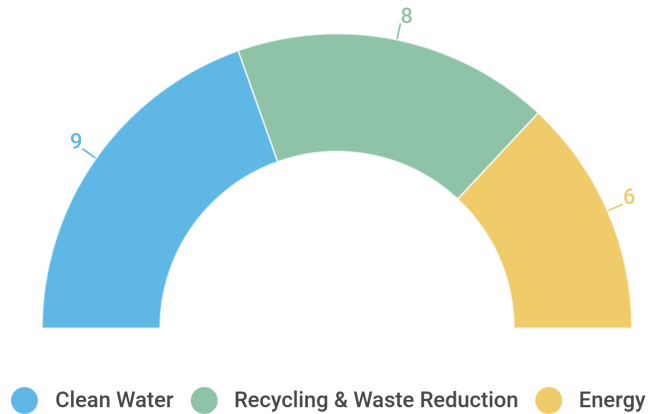
IN 2019:

The EAC promoted programs and initiatives at numerous community events, reaching 1,831 people.

You may have seen us at:

- Heartland Community College Campus Cleanup Event
- Heartland Community College Lifelong Learning event
- Green Top Grocery
- Illinois State University Sustainability Fair
- Girls World Expo
- Advocate Bromenn Earth Day Fair
- Sugar Creek Arts Festival
- LeRoy Replex Health Fair
- Downtown Bloomington Farmer's Market
- Sweet Corn Circus
- Children Discovery Museum's Worldwide Day of Play
- Bloomington Township Day
- Illinois State University TCH223 Exploring Disciplinary Literacy Playground Night
- Unitarian Universalist Church social justice fair
- City of Bloomington Energy Efficiency Day
- Home Lawn and Garden Day
- David Davis Mansion Glorious Gardens Festival
- Illinois State University Fell Arboretum Plant Sale
- Heartland Community College Illinois Prairie Wild Ones
- Illinois State University Horticultural Center's Pollinator Palooza

The EAC held 23 community presentations



12

compost bins were constructed by 13 people at 3 compost workshops



30

rain barrels were constructed by 37 people at 7 rain barrel workshops

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



1,996

Current members



44

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.

SUSTAINABLE GOURMET



The EAC held its annual Sustainable Gourmet fundraiser on November 14 at Epiphany Farms. The chefs at Epiphany Farms created some unique dishes with food they produced on their nearby farm and some additional ingredients from Sitka Salmon.



The event also featured a sampling of sustainably produced wines from Stave Wine Bar and locally crafted beer from Keg Grove Brewing Company and Emancipation Brewing. Keg Grove Brewing used beets, carrots, and lemongrass donated by PrairiErth Farms to create a delicious saison for the event named "Sai What?" Emancipation Brewing featured several of their brews that include locally sourced ingredients.



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



MCLEAN COUNTY GREEN AWARDS

The Ecology Action Center annually presents the McLean County Green Awards in order to recognize significant local efforts to improve our environment. The 2019 award recipients were named at the EAC's annual fall Sustainable Gourmet event.



The McLean County Recycling and Waste Reduction Award identifies businesses, schools or organizations with outstanding recycling programs or waste reduction efforts or individuals who have played a role in a successful program or effort. The 2019 award was presented to a group of volunteers who coordinate local collections of "Terracycle," a nontraditional recycling program that recycles a wide range of diverse items including snack chip bags, drink pouches, water filters, and beauty

product packaging. Amie Keeton, Janet Guaderrama, Macia Nagy, and Melanie Ziomek (pictured above) organize Terracycle collections through a 24-hour drop-off site in partnership with St. Luke Union Church in Bloomington. Over the past several years, they have helped divert over 100,000 items from the landfill through their efforts.

The Anne McGowan Making a World of Difference Award recognizes outstanding projects, activities, or individuals in McLean County that promote environmental awareness or natural resource conservation. The EAC dedicated the World of Difference Award in memory of McGowan, an early director of the EAC, because of her ability to inspire and motivate others to take action. Henry Brockman (pictured on right) is a local organic produce farmer in the Congerville area who provides vegetables to hundreds of Central Illinois residents each year through CSA (community supported agriculture) subscriptions. He is a leader in local food in Central Illinois as he adopts new strategies on an ongoing basis to better protect our local environment, saying "the goal of everything I do in my fields is to give life to the soil and the entire ecosystem." He plants over 650 varieties of vegetables each year, experimenting with new types and improving his practices to adapt to a changing climate.





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.

The EAC helps residents and businesses reduce waste, increase recycling, and properly dispose of hazardous waste through numerous educational and outreach programs such as our Recycle Coach app and our fourth grade recycling classroom programs, and at local events like our biennial Household Hazardous Waste Collection and our compost station at the Sweet Corn Circus.

HHW COLLECTION EVENT

In September 2019, with a broad base of support, the Ecology Action Center repeated the successful public-private strategy of 2012, 2015, and 2017 and held a locally funded Household Hazardous Waste Collection for McLean County residents.

The event brought 1,050 cars to the Rivian Automotive plant and served an estimated 1,680 McLean County households. This was the first time the EAC required residents to register for the HHW event in advance using a web-based registration system. This led to a significant reduction in wait time for attendees and made the collection process easier for volunteers to manage.

We successfully collected 16,242 gallons of hazardous waste materials for safe disposal in addition to 17,501 pounds of electronic waste to recycle. While there was a reduction in both volume of materials collected and households participating from recent events, this can be attributed to some hesitation on the part of local residents to transition to the new appointment-based system. The lower turnout was a positive factor in managing this transition, however it is anticipated that the negligible wait times for event participants throughout the day should help return participation rates to normal within the next couple of HHW events.





We had 79 volunteers work over 300 hours helping the EAC staff set up, work the HHW collection event, and tear everything back down at the end of the day. The event would not be possible without all their help!

The event is also only possible with funding from our public partners, private sponsors, and individual donations. The City of Bloomington, Town of Normal, and McLean County together act as the major public funders for the collection providing \$140,000 to cover the costs of this service. The EAC raised another \$34,009 from private sources, including sponsorships from local businesses, donations from families and individuals, and in-kind contributions of services. These private funds supplement local government funding and ensure adequate resources are available to cover the full costs of the HHW collection. The resources provided through private fundraising successfully exceeded the final costs of the event, leaving nearly \$19,000 of funding available for the next HHW collection, anticipated for 2021.

09/09/19

DEAR MICHAEL

JUST WANTED TO DROP A LINE RE: HHW DAY 2019. MUST COMPLEMENT YOU ON A WELL ORGANIZED, EFFICIENT COLLECTION DAY. I ARRIVED ON SITE AT 1002 AND EXITED AT 1016. I HAVE ATTENDED PREVIOUS HHW COLLECTION DAYS. MY SHORTEST WAIT WAS 30-45 MINUTES, THE LONGEST APPROACHED 2 HOURS. I CERTAINLY HOPE THIS BECOMES THE MODEL FOR FUTURE COLLECTION DAYS!

THANK YOU!

Scott G. Lewis



9/9/19

I cannot begin to tell you how impressed I was with this year's HHW Collection. Beginning with excellent signage, to ALL the volunteers along the route, to the impressive cone layout for the various collection sites and to legit. hours w/out an appointment (which was the greatest idea ever) I expected it to be no less than 1.5 hours. Congratulations on a job well done for such a worthy cause.

John Optima

COUNTY RECYCLING RATE

As the community’s solid waste agency, the Ecology Action Center 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.

McLean County’s recycling rate increased for the third year in a row in 2018. The Ecology Action Center’s annual calculation of community-wide waste generation and recycling shows that the county reached a recycling rate of 46% with an increase of 4.5% from 2017. As a result, the county maintained progress made in 2016 in breaking the previous community-wide recycling goal of 40% while also making progress toward the new community-wide recycling rate goal of 50% set in 2017 under the new 20-year solid waste management plan. No single category of recyclable materials saw significant fluctuations from the year prior, while there were minor fluctuations across the board in all material streams.

With the closure of the McLean County Landfill in late 2018, the EAC continues to focus on waste management priorities as outlined in the Twenty-Year Materials Recovery and Resource Management Plan for McLean County, Bloomington, and Normal, Illinois. This includes diversion strategies for waste that would otherwise require landfill disposal further away from the source of origin.

McLean County Waste Generation and Recycling Rates: 2014-2018

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Total MSW Recycled (tons)	85,196	81,302	83,335	88,459	94,804
Total MSW Landfilled (tons)	141,068	154,662	120,815	124,364	109,467
Total Municipal Solid Waste Generated (tons)	226,264	235,964	204,150	211,230	204,271
Recycling Rate	37.7%	34.5%	40.8%	41.9%	46.4%

IPCF RECYCLING PROGRAMS

In 2018, the EAC applied for and received full funding from the Illinois Prairie Community Foundation Green Endowment for a program titled “Reducing Barriers for Sustainable Recycling.” The program sought to eliminate the economic and perceived barriers reducing residents’ ability to recycle. Barriers in both the Town of Normal and the City of Bloomington were addressed through two separate programs based on the respective municipality’s most significant barriers and needs.

The Town of Normal has historically charged households for recycling carts, creating a barrier to participation for some low-income households. In Normal, grant funding was used to purchase household recycling carts for distribution to lower-income households. At the beginning of the grant period, the City of Bloomington lacked the appropriate infrastructure in the downtown area to support recycling. In Bloomington, grant funding was used to purchase permanent outdoor recycling receptacles for this area of high pedestrian traffic. This program served a broader population of residents and visitors passing through the downtown area.

Grant funding ended in May, at which point the EAC assessed how successful the pilot program was in meeting the program’s primary goals: to increase the feasibility of recycling for individuals residing in the City of Bloomington and Town of Normal, and eliminate the associated barriers to recycling by expanding the existing infrastructure.

In Normal, 41 households participated in the program. Over the course of the grant period, households utilized weekly recycling pickup nearly 75% of the time. It was promising to find that around 80% of the households would either throw away unfamiliar items or inquire what to do with them before making a decision. Overall, the data gathered from the Normal program appears to support the concept that by reducing barriers to and increasing the convenience of recycling, households are likely to utilize curbside-recycling pickup regularly. Participants seemed generally receptive to the educational information on recycling and alternative disposal options that they were receiving as part of the program, but indicated that as a community, awareness (of available programs) is viewed as the largest barrier to individuals more actively engaging in correct recycling behaviors.

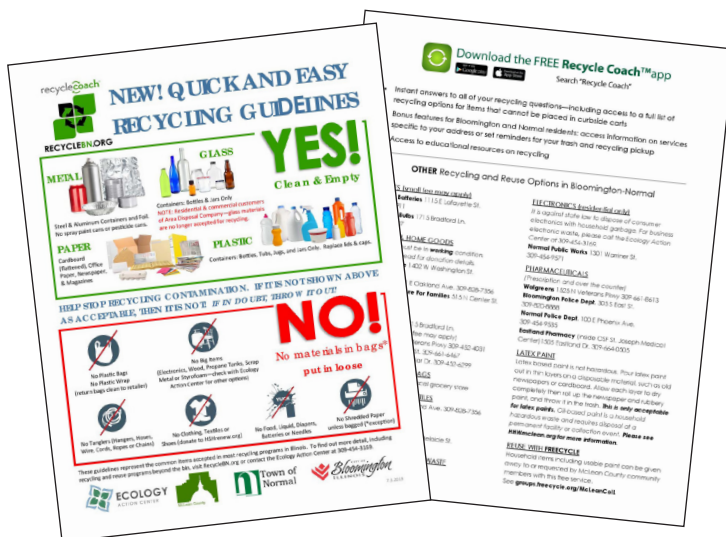


In Bloomington, over 3,976 pounds of waste material was diverted from the landfill over the course of the grant period. However, this number only represents that collected in the four grant-funded receptacles as part of the initial project. There are eight total recycling bins in downtown Bloomington, four from the EAC grant, and four donated by local recycling and waste haulers. The total amount of material diverted from the landfill for all eight bins is estimated to be closer to 5,964 pounds. The average capacity among the four original bins monitored during the grant period was similar throughout the week, indicating that the receptacles were utilized consistently during the week, regardless of the season. Overall, these results suggest that the benefits of having permanent recycling fixtures in the downtown area extend beyond weekend events while it is evident that residents and visitors are taking advantage of more convenient options in place throughout the week.



NEW RECYCLING GUIDELINES

In an effort to reduce contamination and simplify the recycling process, a streamlined recycling flyer was developed that is designed to be universal across Illinois. The state-wide task force of industry professionals identified the most common non-recyclable items ending up in the recycling stream. These include plastic bags, tanglers (i.e. garden hoses, wire, cords, clothing), food waste, medical waste (including syringes), and batteries, all of which are outlined on the new flyer.



To help clear up this confusion, the EAC spent 2019 distributing thousands of the new standardized recycling flyers with simplified messaging for McLean County residents, coupled with increased marketing messages and education outreach addressing issues of contamination.

MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING RECYCLING UPDATE

In 2019, a new ordinance approved by the Town of Normal went into effect requiring property owners to provide on-site recycling for all Normal multi-family housing residents. EAC staff spent the year assisting Normal apartment managers in implementing on-site recycling. This included the development of a recycling toolkit and other educational materials for distribution to property managers, students, and tenants. The EAC also worked closely with the Illinois State University Office of Sustainability to educate and encourage students living in off-campus housing to reference the EAC’s recycling guidelines in order to help decrease contamination in the recycling stream.

EAC staff also spent time over the last year surveying recycling at apartments to document and record contamination rates among sites. This data continues to help property managers identify problem areas and communicate accurate information with their tenants. Throughout the transition to on-site recycling, the EAC has simultaneously recorded these changes to update our RecycleCoach app for Town of Normal residents in multi-family housing. The RecycleCoach app provides recycling information to McLean County residents based on geographic location, including waste and recycling pick-up reminders.

This work coincides with Waste Management Priority #3 “Multifamily Recycling,” as outlined in the updated Twenty-Year Solid Waste Management Plan for McLean County. With the closing of the McLean County landfill in the fall of 2018, the updated plan emphasizes the need for more sustainable methods of waste reduction through six new Waste Management Priorities. It is anticipated that a continual increase of available recycling options will help improve the County’s updated recycling rate goals over the next 20 years.



COMPOST WORKSHOPS

In 2019 the EAC hosted three compost workshops with 13 attendees building 12 compost bins. At our workshops attendees are educated on various types of compost systems and techniques, in addition to troubleshooting tips to avoid potential problems.

For the final compost bin workshop of the season, the EAC debuted a new model in celebration of America Recycles Day. The new model is made from an ultra-durable, 55-gallon drum that is easy to move around the yard. The convenient size also provides the perfect amount of space for compost to brew properly, and an open top that makes stirring and transporting finished compost a breeze.

This new model was such a hit, we plan to bring it back for our compost workshops in 2020!





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 programs for all third-grade classrooms in McLean County, 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

On June 29, the Ecology Action Center hosted its 17th Annual Yard Smart Garden Walk. Yard Smart helps teach residents about methods for environmentally friendly yards that are safe for people, pets, and the planet by minimizing use of chemicals and increasing organic product use and gardening with instead of against nature.

This year's walk had 53 attendees and featured three homes in Normal and the Unitarian Universalist Church in Bloomington. The gardens highlighted native plants, ponds, beekeeping, and a memorial garden established using an organic layered gardening technique. Bill Inks, the owner of AB Hatchery and Garden Center, gave a presentation to attendees about organic pest and weed control products.

The event was advertised using social media, The Pantagraph, WGLT, WJBC, and in the brochure for the David Davis Mansion Glorious Garden Walk.



SUGAR CREEK STEWARDS

Sugar Creek Stewards is designed to raise awareness about Sugar Creek as an important community storm water system and ecosystem. The EAC works with volunteers at designated sites to improve the overall health and aesthetics of Sugar Creek through invasive species control and removal, allowing native species to thrive.

Bloomington:

- In March, four volunteers worked along the bridge where the creek meets Airport Road.
- During May, June, and July workdays at Ewing II, two Blackhaw Viburnum, two Witchhazel, six Chokeberry, 15 Columbine, 10 Waterleaf, 10 Woodland Aster, 10 ZigZag Goldenrod, and 20 Wild Ginger were planted. Seven volunteers continued to remove Honeysuckle to let new plants thrive and also removed Bindweed and Thistle.
- In October and November, six volunteers continued to remove Honeysuckle at Ewing II and seeded a native woodland mix in empty spaces.

Normal:

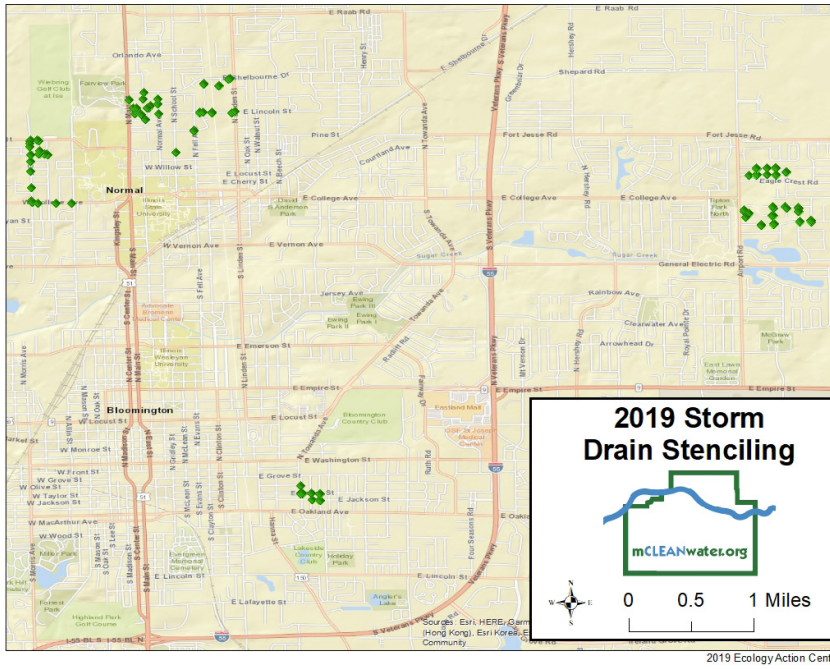
- Two volunteers removed Honeysuckle along the creek behind the ISU Alumni Center in February.
- In April, six volunteers removed Honeysuckle and spread native seeds at Fairview behind the Juvenile Detention Center.
- During August and September workdays, 19 volunteers cleared Ragweed, Crownvetch, Honeysuckle, and Thistle at Fairview.
- Three volunteers seeded native seed in December at Fairview north of the bridge off the main road.

SUGAR CREEK CLEAN-UP EVENT

The EAC coordinated the annual Sugar Creek and Constitution Trail Clean-Up Day with area partners, Friends of the Constitution Trail, Bike BloNo, and McLean County Wheelers. A hundred volunteers collected approximately 1,000 pounds of trash out of the creek and along the Constitution Trail from Tipton Park to the Audubon Garden at Vernon. This clean-up event helps collect waste which also improves the health of Sugar Creek as a storm water management system.



STORM DRAIN STENCILING



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 go to designated neighborhoods and spray paint "Drains to Stream, Keep it Clean" reminders near storm drains. The EAC tracks all the storm drains 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 47 volunteers including Heartland Community College students, Illinois State University students, the Paul Mitchell Green Team, and local Girl Scout members. These volunteers stenciled 158 storm drains and distributed information to 668 homes in Bloomington and Normal.

RAIN BARREL WORKSHOPS



The EAC offered seven rain barrel workshops where 37 attendees built their own rain barrels to take home. Workshops also contained an educational presentation about storm water runoff pollution and prevention, and best practices for rain barrel use. From these workshops, 30 rain catching devices were constructed.

BN ENERGY BRIGHT

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 2019, we completed 32 home energy audits Bloomington and Normal. Three households also took advantage of the additional blower door air leak testing.

Based on figures from the Department of Energy, if residents implement the majority of the easier to accomplish efficiency recommendations (sealing air leaks, setting thermostat back 7-10 degrees for eight hours a day, replacing frequently used light fixtures with LED bulbs, lower water heating temperature, insulating hot water pipes and the heater tank) they can save a low estimate of \$555 annually on energy costs. Using these figures, participating households cumulatively saved as much as \$17,760 in 2019.

The average Illinois household uses 129 million BTUs of energy per year. Based on the energy equivalents of the monetary savings estimates above, implementing the basic efficiency recommendations means a savings of 34.6 million BTU per household. This is the equivalent to removing 3.7 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions per household.

BN Energy Bright has reached over 844 members of the community through presentations, events, and phone inquiries, and reached community members 1,598,033 times through media coverage, advertisements, social media, and our website.



32

home energy audits



\$17,760

total estimated energy savings of all participating households in 2019



844

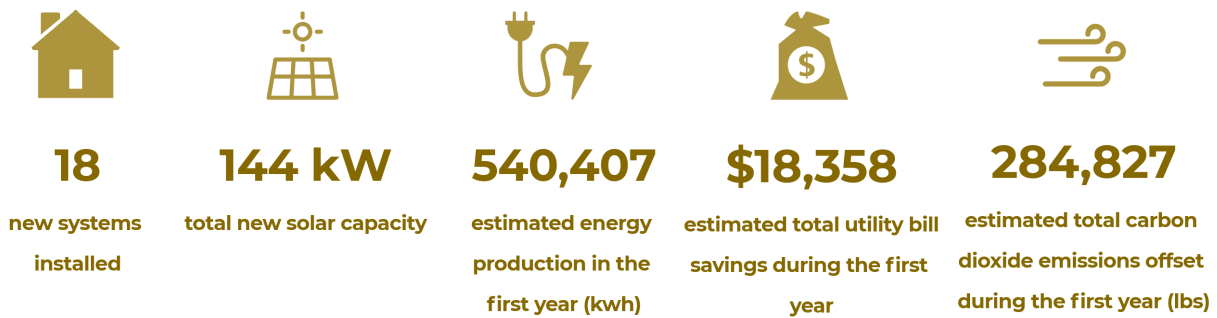
people reached through presentations, events, and phone inquiries

GROW SOLAR BLOOMINGTON-NORMAL

The EAC partnered with the Midwest Renewable Energy Association to leverage the current energy efficiency program to conduct a third solar group purchasing program in Bloomington-Normal in 2019. The program secured an installer through a competitive bid process, and that installer agrees to offer solar at a reduced rate during the five-month program. Community members attend educational Solar Power Hour presentations given by the EAC staff to learn about solar and the program.

In 2019, EAC staff led 21 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 126 participants about the BN Energy Bright program and the importance of energy efficiency.

The EAC made complimentary energy audits available to every program participant, and six audits were scheduled through the program.



ILLINOIS SOLAR FOR ALL

The Ecology Action Center was selected as one of 10 non-profits in the state to be the first cohort of grassroots educators for the Illinois Solar for All program — a program within the state’s Future Energy Jobs Act (FEJA) designed to increase access to solar energy for low-income residents, environmental justice communities, and non-profits and public facilities that serve low-income communities. The program began in June 2019 and ends in March 2020.

During the 2019 program year:

- The Ecology Action Center reached out to Mid Central Community Action, Habitat for Humanity McLean County, West Bloomington Revitalization Project, and the Normal Township’s Activity and Recreation Center. These organizations agreed to help promote the program to their constituents, and serve as host sites for multiple informational presentations.
- The EAC held a total of 12 presentations with a total of 48 attendees covering what solar is, how it works, and how income-eligible residents and non-profit and public facilities can access the benefits of the Illinois Solar for All program.
- The EAC promoted the program through multiple radio ads, print ads in The Pantagraph, and, with the help of several volunteers, distributed 2,000 door hangers in West Bloomington neighborhoods.



COMMUNITY ENERGY STRATEGIC PLAN

In 2014, the Ecology Action Center, working closely with local municipalities, completed an initial greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions inventory for the Bloomington-Normal community using data from 2008. This initial report quantified total and per capita GHG emissions in addition to identifying the main sources of direct emissions generated by our community, and serves as a baseline to measure future inventories against. The EAC staff began its second GHG inventory in 2015, and the final report is nearing completion. The 2015 follow-up inventory was broader in scope, looking at other air quality emissions like ozone, which are regulated under the National Ambient Air Quality Standards, and can be dangerous to public health.

Currently, the EAC is coordinating a collaborative community air quality planning process defined by the U.S. Department of Energy as a Community Energy Strategic Plan or CESP. The Bloomington-Normal Community Energy Strategic Plan (BNCESP) is focused on developing strategies for carbon emissions reduction and air quality improvements relative to the local sources and categories quantified in the GHG emissions inventory. Stakeholders representing a variety of perspectives and backgrounds are exploring issues contributing to climate change, carbon emissions, and other air pollution, and are brainstorming strategies that can help remedy these issues in our community.

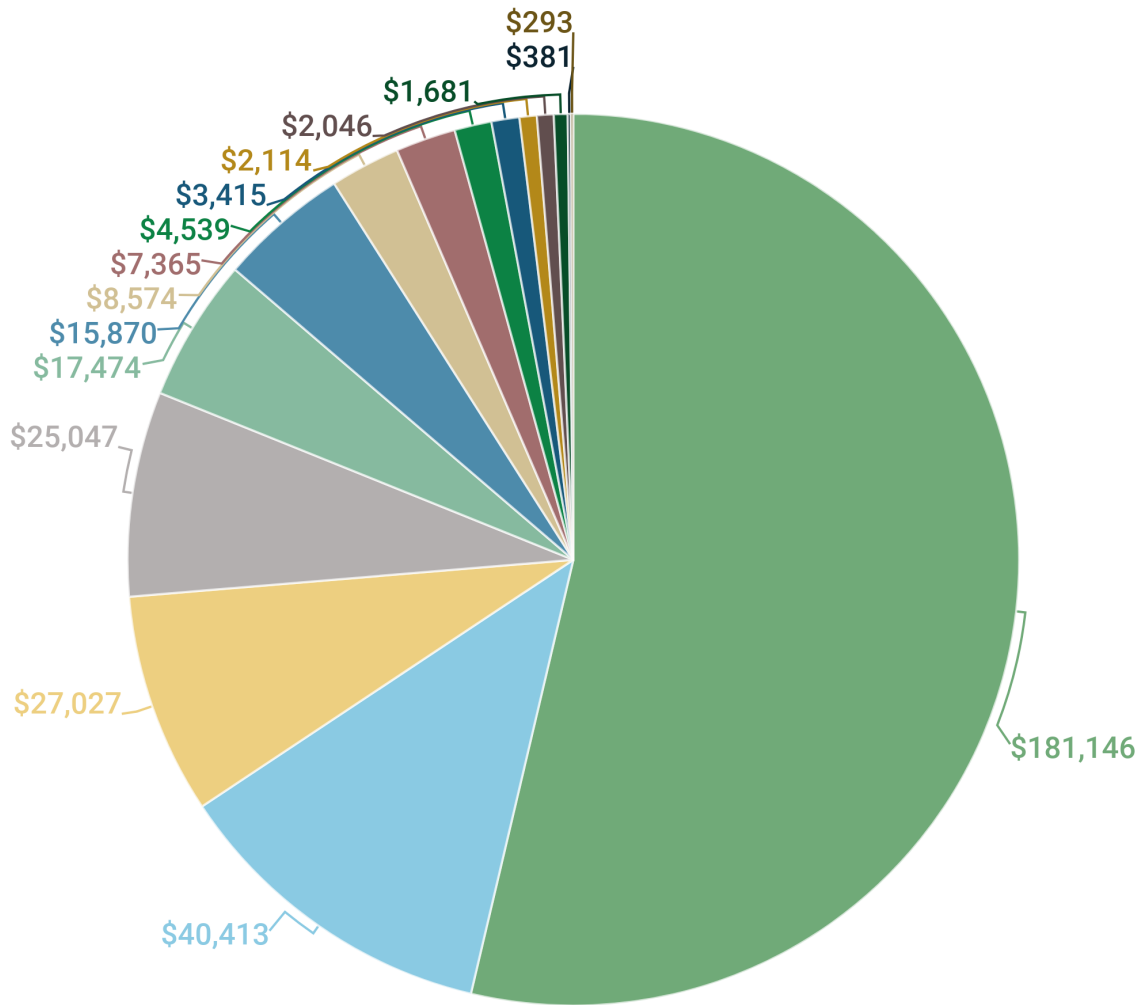
Over a year of work is already invested into this process; EAC staff anticipates conclusion of the plan and public release sometime in the second half of 2020.

BNCESP process stakeholders:

- Town of Normal
- City of Bloomington
- ISU Community Health
- ISU Environmental Health
- ISU Renewable Energy
- IWU Environmental Studies
- Friends of the Constitution Trail
- McLean County Wheelers
- West Bloomington Revitalization Project Bike Co-op
- Connect Transit
- McLean County Highway Department
- Rivian Automotive
- City of Bloomington Planning Department
- Normal Public Works
- Bloomington Public Works
- Illinois Farm Bureau
- Normal Community West High School students
- McLean County Regional Planning Commission
- Nicor Gas
- Corn Belt Energy
- StraightUp Solar
- Bloomington High School student and faculty representatives
- McLean County Chamber of Commerce
- McLean County Indian Association



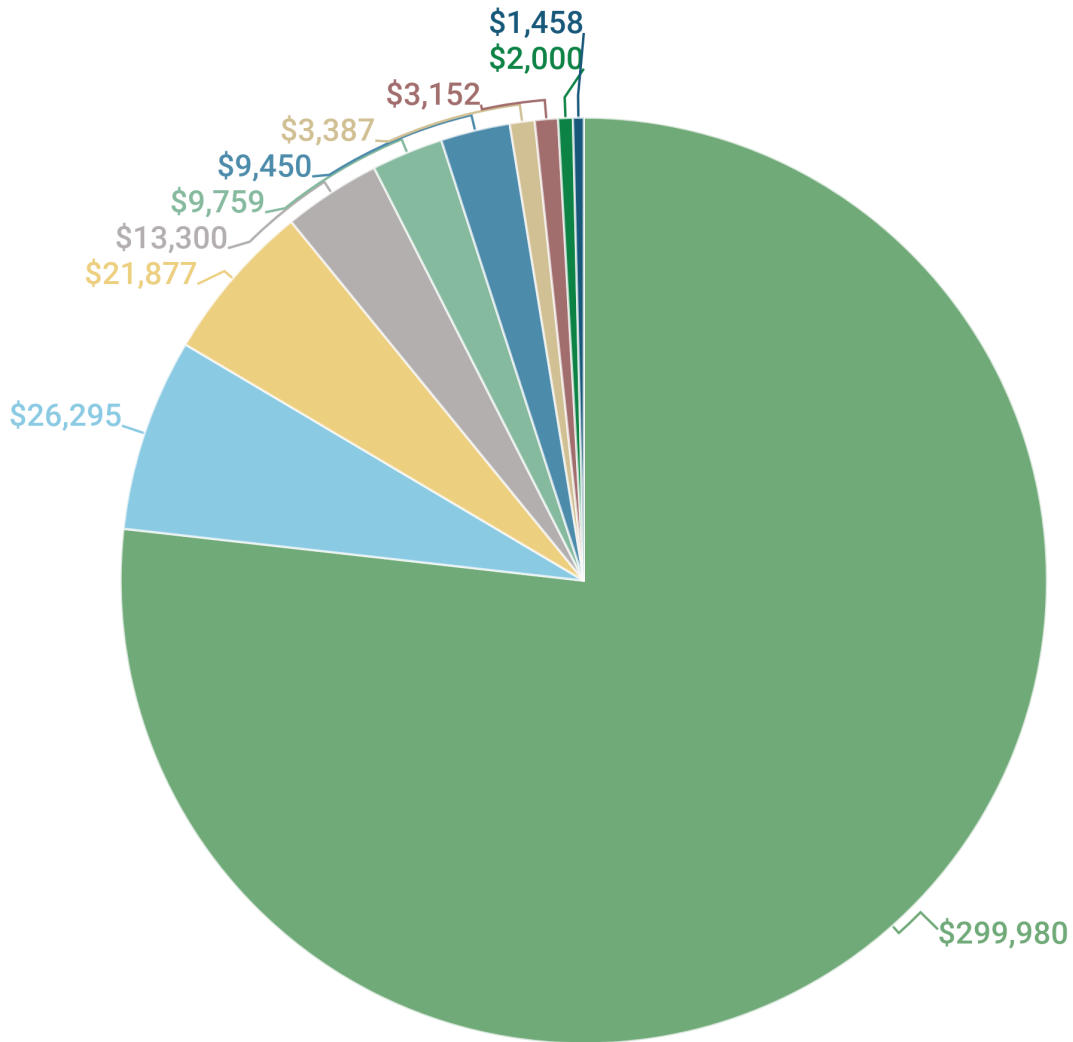
2019 FINANCIAL SUMMARY: EXPENSES



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

Total expenses for 2019: \$337,385

2019 FINANCIAL SUMMARY: REVENUE



- Governmental Support
 Contributions
 Membership Dues
- Sponsorships
 Program Fees
 Fundraising Events
- Micellaneous Income
 Investment Return
 Grant Income
- Merchandise Sales

Total revenue for 2019: \$390,658

2019 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 Health Department
- McLean County Regional Planning Commission
- Town of Normal
- WGLT

Business & Private Supporters

- A & B Hatchery
- Accent Nature
- Area Disposal
- Bakery and Pickle
- Compeer Financial
- Core 3
- Destihl Brewery
- Emancipation Brewing
- Epiphany Farms
- Great Plains Media
- GreenTop Grocery
- Henson Disposal
- Illinois Farm Bureau
- John & Marilyn Freese
- Keg Grove Brewery
- Midwest Fiber
- Paul E & Kathy Packard
- PrairiErth Farm
- Renkon Yoga Studio
- Republic Services
- Rivian Automotive
- Sitka Salmon LLC
- Stave Wine Bar
- StraightUp Solar
- Workbench Architects
- Zimmerman & Armstrong Investment Advisors

Non-profit Sponsors & Partners

- Bloomington-Normal Jaycees
- Bloomington-Normal Junior Women's Club
- Friends of the Constitution Trail
- Habitat For Humanity McLean County
- 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
- West Bloomington Revitalization Project
- YWCA McLean County

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ACTION CENTER

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