



# ECOLOGY NEWS

ACTION CENTER

Volume 18, Issue 3

Fall 2020

## BN Green Events

### October

10/17 **Sugar Creek Stewards Work Day**  
9:00 am—12:00 pm

### November

11/4 **You, Me and the EAC** 5 pm—6pm

11/6 **Green Reads Book Club** 12:00 pm—1:00 pm

### **Coming soon...**

*Live Facebook chats to answer all of your questions—recycling, hazardous waste, energy efficiency, solar, clean air, clean water, and more. We'll answer all of your FAQs via our new recurring **EAQs with EAC series. Find our more on Facebook!***

### **Office Updates:**

- Open by appointment only
- New mailing address:

**Ecology Action Center**  
PO Box 97  
Normal, IL 61761

## Today, Tomorrow, and Beyond

When we pivoted this spring to develop online programming, we never imagined we would be continuing into the fall with so much uncertainty. From Zoom virtual backgrounds and digital microscopes, to webinars and small group children's programs, keeping our creativity in high gear while striving to continue our mission has been taxing and tough at times. At the same time, every success feels like a real accomplishment! Even in the face of uncertainty about what our own work might look like moving forward, we are as certain as ever that the work we are doing holds an important place in our collective health and well-being, that addressing environmental inequities is part of the larger picture for a more just world, and that ecological action continues to have an critical role in the world of 2020.

The new paradigm that we live in means we need to continually work to innovate new and better ways to reach the community as our traditional strategies of in-person outreach are not currently viable. And simultaneously, we need to make sure we are meeting the changing needs of our community and keeping the lines of communication open with our supporters since we are less likely to see you face to face at events, public meetings, or on the street.

Accordingly, we are going to try something new—monthly virtual input sessions that we are calling **You, Me, and the EAC**. We will host open Zoom sessions for any EAC member/financial supporter to log on and give us feedback. This is an opportunity to share ideas, concerns, questions, or whatever and hear some brief updates from EAC staff. These will NOT be broadcast to the general public, but rather will be a closed, registration-required Zoom session for financial supporters of the Ecology Action Center. *We want to hear from you.* Please join us for casual discussion of whatever is on your mind. Your input will allow us to continue to adapt and improve our services to better meet the environmental needs of our community.

Learn more and sign up at [ecologyactioncenter.org](http://ecologyactioncenter.org) using the BN Green Events calendar on the right side of the page. The first session is Wednesday, November 4 at 5 p.m. via Zoom.

**EcoAction:** Please join us—we truly want to hear from you!

## Energy Efficiency and Solar Opportunities for Income Eligible Residents

The EAC is working on two programs designed to make energy efficiency and solar more accessible for residents living at or below 80% of the Area Median Income in our community. If you or someone you know meet the income levels below based on the number of people in your household, you are likely eligible for one of these programs!

Number of people in the household	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Bloomington, IL HUD Metro FMR Area (McLean County)	\$46,700	\$54,400	\$60,050	\$66,700	\$72,050	\$77,400	\$82,750	\$88,050

The Ameren-Nicor Pilot Program for Bloomington-Normal is offering free energy saving kits for up to 600 homes in Bloomington-Normal. These kits will be customized to meet each resident's needs and will include items like water-saving aerators and shower heads, weather sealing, and LED lightbulbs. Up to 80 homeowners in our community can also apply for an energy audit and, based on the results of the audit, can receive free air-sealing, attic insulation, a furnace tune-up, and other energy saving items. Qualifying residents can redeem their energy kit (and be screened for the weatherization offer) by calling 309-249-8204. Tell them the EAC sent you!

In addition, the EAC was selected for a second round of Illinois Solar for All grassroots education. Residents who meet the above income levels are eligible to have solar installed at their home with no up-front costs and guaranteed monthly lease costs lower than their current energy supply rate, or can sign up for a community solar subscription with the same guaranteed monthly cost savings on their energy supply.

These are excellent opportunities for residents in our community to reduce their energy consumption and costs, and expand renewable energy in our community at the same time.

**EcoAction:** Share this information with your friends and neighbors! If you or anyone you know meets these income qualifications, reach out to EAC Assistant Director Larissa Armstrong at [larms@ecologyactioncenter.org](mailto:larms@ecologyactioncenter.org) or 309-454-3169 x15.

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### Action is Our Middle Name

Raise your hand if you're just "done" with 2020. Raise your other hand if you are feeling helpless in the face of this year's events. Raise your *OTHER* hand if you have been looking for something specific and concrete you can do to help make the world a better place. Okay, you can put all those hands down now.

The EAC has long been an important source of information and resources for local residents on how to live a more sustainable lifestyle, but YOU play a critical role in that success. We are refocusing our supporter newsletter on specific action steps that YOU can take to be part of the solution. Watch each article from now on for an EcoAction suggestion.

**EcoAction:** please share your ideas for future articles, important local sustainability news, or your own preferred EcoAction tips with us. Contact us via our website, Facebook, write us a letter, or just give us a call!

## Got Hazardous Waste?

Many people have spent a lot more time at home compared to other years. Quite a few of us worked frantically to carve out additional home office and school space, or just needed to escape and get a little headspace – so many of us started cleaning up basements, garages, and sheds, discovering household hazardous waste (HHW) in need of disposal.

Many community members are sorting through partial cans of oil paint, automotive fluids, household cleaners, and lawn and garden products. We consider it a sign of success that so many residents are aware that all of these items warrant special handling, and that they call us for more information. We were thrilled to implement an improved drive-through appointment system at our biennial HHW collection event last fall, and we're eager to get the ball rolling for the fall 2021 collection event. As an EAC member, you may be aware that regular state funding for HHW collections is sporadic, which is why the EAC began working with our local governments to ensure our community had access to an HHW collection event every two years.

As people everywhere clear space for a different version of "normal", many in our community are trying hard to preserve the environment as well as their own sanity, by seeking proper disposal for their HHW. We will continue to do our best to answer questions, provide alternative options when possible, and ensure these substances are handled properly and don't end up in our regional landfills or waterways. The closest collection event being offered by the IL EPA this fall is on November 7 in Springfield. It is for **residential** hazardous waste only, and requires pre-registration at [www.springfield.il.us/hhw](http://www.springfield.il.us/hhw).

**EcoAction:** Please spread the word, encourage people to safely store their HHW items until we are able to host our next collection event. If your friends or neighbors are moving, encourage them to find friends or neighbors willing to store the items for them, and please donate to support our next HHW event and encourage others to do as well. [HHWmclean.org](http://HHWmclean.org)

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## Green Reads Book Club

The EAC launched **Green Reads**, our first community-wide book club, in April 2020 in celebration of the 50th Anniversary of Earth Day, and as a way to build community during the pandemic, and after three books we're still going strong but want you to join the discussion too!

The purpose of Green Reads is to create opportunities to build knowledge, deepen commitments, and take further action to protect clean water, improve air quality, reduce carbon emissions, improve energy efficiency, and reduce waste, for a more sustainable and healthy local environment for all.

We'll start our final book for the year in November. You can join us on zoom for a meeting every other Friday from noon—1pm through December 18, or join the discussion on our EAC Green Reads Facebook page.

On November 6 we will begin discussing our final book, *A World of Three Zeros: The New Economics of Zero Poverty, Zero Unemployment, and Zero Carbon Emissions* by Mohammed Yunus. Visit the Green Reads page on our website ([ecologyactioncenter.org/green-reads-book-club](http://ecologyactioncenter.org/green-reads-book-club)) to learn more about the books. There you can sign up to join us in our Zoom discussion group.

**EcoAction:** Check out our upcoming book. If it interests you, please join us!



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