



ECOLOGY NEWS

ACTION CENTER

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EPA Air Quality Grant Proposal

The Ecology Action Center is partnering with Illinois State University Environmental Health and Community Health professors and the Bloomington-Normal chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) on a grant proposal to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for the Advancement of Air Quality Monitoring in Communities grant opportunity.

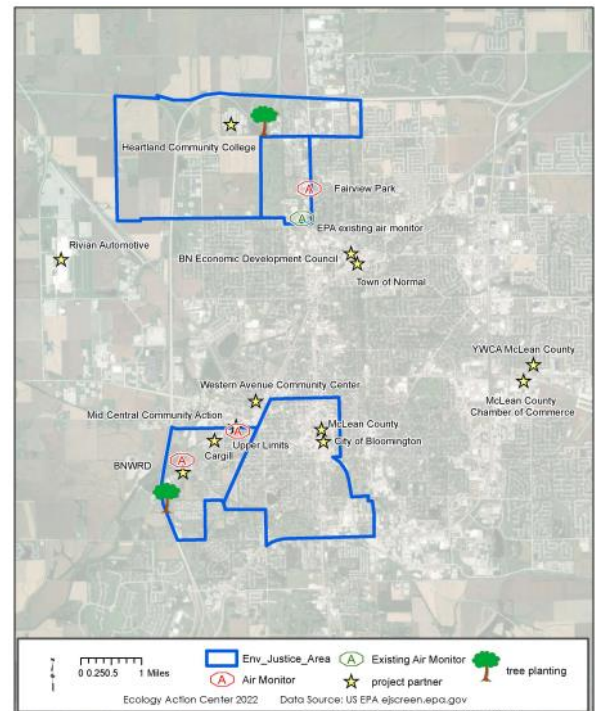
The goal is to create a community ambient air quality monitoring program to quantify pollution levels in identified environmental justice areas in Bloomington-Normal, and then use that data to engage residents about disproportionate impacts of environmental degradation for underserved populations, and to promote environmental equity in our community.

The EPA's EJ Screen Tool compiles socioeconomic, health, and pollution data, and uses that data to highlight areas where the combination of environmental pollutants and socioeconomic factors create an area where residents are likely to experience increased negative health impacts of environmental degradation. These are called environmental justice areas. Based on data from EJ Screen, this project will focus on the environmental justice areas of northwest Normal and southwest Bloomington.

If awarded funding, the team will install three fixed air quality monitors, one in northwest Normal and two in southwest Bloomington. Data from the air monitors will be gathered and analyzed by the EAC and ISU, and with the help of NAACP, shared with community members and local agencies.

There will be opportunities for community groups to learn about and utilize additional portable air monitors for short-term projects which can add data to the collective project.

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The hope is that increased quantitative information about air quality in these environmental justice areas, and engagement with residents about this data, will increase awareness about the negative impacts of pollution, and empower residents and organizations to take steps to reduce emissions and increase mitigation opportunities.

April Showers Bring...Water Pollution

Pollutants like automotive fluids, pet waste, and lawn care products get swept up by spring rains, and carried straight to our rivers and lakes (some of which are our sources of drinking water). This doesn't have to happen! Here are a few things you can do to prevent springtime storm water from moving pollution into our ground and surface waters:

- Check car and mower engines for leaks, and dispose of oil properly.
- Don't let waste make it into the environment! Maintain septic systems properly, and clean up after your pet (when on walks, and in your own yard).
- Read and follow label directions when using fertilizers, pesticides and cleaners.
 - Better yet, remove the need for chemical garden and yard additives by being more Yard Smart!
You can find the EAC's extensive environmentally friendly gardening techniques at YardSmart.org
- Clean up spills promptly and properly.
- Keep leaves and other yard waste out of the street. They can be left in place, mulched down, or placed properly for pickup on the curb (not in the street).



With these simple actions, you can help protect our environment and keep our drinking water safe. For even more effective pollution prevention, consider adding a rain barrel to your home's downspout system. Visit ecologyactioncenter.org/clean-water/rain-barrels/ or call 309-454-3169 extension 12 for more information.

Storm Drain Stenciling

Storm drain stenciling with the EAC is another great way to help spread the word about the dangers of storm water runoff pollution! Get a group of your friends, colleagues, family members together to volunteer for an afternoon. Volunteers spray paint stencils next to storm drains that say "Drains to Stream, Keep it Clean" and then distribute informational door hangers to the residences in the area that explain what storm water runoff pollution is, and how we can work together to prevent it!

Interested in volunteering? Contact Jen at jgravely@ecologyactioncenter.org or 309-454-3169 x12.



Time to Collect Spring Rains!

Snow and 10 degree temperatures? That's so last week! Spring has sprung: it's 70 degrees and sunny, and April showers are on their way. Time to set re-install your rain barrel!

Here's how:

- Check your barrel, screen, and hoses for damage that may have occurred due to rodents, storage, etc.
- Verify that the site is level, and set your rain barrel up on concrete blocks or similar, high enough that you can get your hose or watering can under the spigot.
- Adjust your downspout to ensure water will flow into the barrel. Depending on your setup, that could be as simple as moving a lever on a diverter, or you may need a screwdriver to remove a cap or swap out a downspout section.
- Secure the downspout hose or tube so that wind will not move it out of position. Attach the overflow hose and make sure any excess water is directed to an appropriate location and away from your home's foundation.
- Finally, the next time it rains, take a moment to observe your set up and make sure water is flowing into the barrel, and not shooting past the screen.

Don't have a rain barrel? We got you! EAC rain barrels are reclaimed from locally discarded food-grade containers. Our ecologically sound cleaning process is extensive, and time-consuming, but well worth the effort! An experienced EAC staff member has developed our durable yet economical design, with features like low spigot placement to minimize stagnant water, and a top-screen that is effective yet easy to remove for cleaning using a simple paint can opener. Best of all, our knowledgeable staff are here to help you obtain as much support as needed to ensure the barrel is installed correctly and set up to work for you.

If you need to replace damaged parts, would like to upgrade your set up, or would like to explore adding a rain barrel to your property, visit ecologyactioncenter.org for more information or contact us at 309-454-3169 extension 12.



Save the Dates

April is always a busy month here at the EAC! We will need your help to get everything accomplished!

- **Plant Trees!** Look out for MULTIPLE tree planting dates, and new opportunities to set up tree fundraising teams.
- **Creek and Trail Clean-up** - Saturday April 23rd is clean-up day! Registration will be available soon!
- **Sugar Creek Stewards**—Saturday, April 16 from 9am—noon. Register at ecologyactioncenter.org BN Green Events
- **Earth Day Live 2022** - Join us for a virtual Earth Day celebration on Friday, April 22 at 6pm!



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