



ECOLOGY NEWS

ACTION CENTER

Volume 23, Issue 1

Spring 2023

10,000 Trees in 2023!

Help the Ecology Action Center and local partners plant 10,000 trees in 2023! At approximately \$5 per tree, we need to raise as much as \$50,000 for this year's tree planting efforts. The Ecology Action Center is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, and all contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowable by law. Your donations (as an individual, as a Tree Team group, or as a business sponsorship) are necessary to support another successful year of tree planting.

Many hands make light work—volunteer to help us plant trees this spring! Most of these trees are seedlings, and we plant them using a “dibble bar”. Please sign up for one (or several) of our planting workdays in April (more information at Tree-Corps.org).

To meet the need for both donations and volunteer labor for planting, the EAC encouraged church congregations, community groups, workplace groups, families, and other interested groups to support planting 100 trees by forming a Tree Corps Team. At \$5 per tree the recommended minimum group pledge is \$500. Tree Teams can also support the Tree Corps effort by recruiting volunteers to help plant.

This year we are planting native hardwood seedlings at several different sites. This includes trail trees with Friends of the Constitution Trail in the Funks Grove area, infill plantings at the Bloomington Normal Water Reclamation District and Heartland Community College, and 5000 trees at the ParkLands Foundation Lexington Preserve as part of the Mike Hall Tree Project!

The Mike Hall Tree Project is in memory of Mike Hall who passed away on January 7, 2023. Mike was a longtime familiar face in the Bloomington-Normal community, working for the Town of Normal for twenty-two years, fourteen of which he served as the Director of Public Works, overseeing waste and recycling programs and other critical services that help protect our local environment. The EAC and ParkLands are celebrating his community impact through this planting project.

Please donate generously within your means to support this project and/or volunteer to help plant trees at workdays in April and May 2023!



recyclecoach



RECYCLEBN.ORG



TREE CORPS
TREE-CORPS.ORG



BN CLEAN AIR FUND
ECOLOGY ACTION CENTER



Spring Volunteer Opportunities

Enjoy the spring weather and volunteer to work outside! The EAC has several opportunities to volunteer this Spring.

Sugar Creek Stewards: If you are interested in native plants and clean waterways, sign up for the Sugar Creek Stewards workday on April 15 from 9am—12pm. Volunteers work along designated areas of Sugar Creek in Bloomington and Normal, removing invasive species, making room for existing native plants to thrive, and creating space to add more native plants. This work helps to improve the creek banks, increase storm water runoff filtration, creates space for wildlife, and improves the aesthetics of the creek. Volunteers must be 18 years old or older (or 14 and accompanied by a parent or guardian) and be able to hike along uneven terrain and safely use basic hand tools such as loppers and bow saws. Register at ecologyactioncenter.org/bngreenevents.



Earth Day Sugar Creek and Constitution Trail Clean-Up: If you want to volunteer on Earth Day, sign up to help clean up the Constitution Trail and Sugar Creek at our annual clean-up event on Saturday April 22 from 9-12pm. The EAC and the Friends of the Constitution Trail need help cleaning up the trail from the Chateau west to Audubon Gardens. A parent or guardian must accompany minors. Trash bags and trash grabbers will be provided. Registration is required. If you are not available to join us for this workday, but still want to help, reach out to the EAC about borrowing trash grabbers, safety vests, and other supplies for your own clean-up efforts! Register at ecologyactioncenter.org/bngreenevents.



Tree Planting: Spring also means it is time to plant more trees with the Tree Corps program! Help the EAC plant 10,000 trees this year to improve air quality, sequester carbon, increase wildlife habitat, provide shade, and more! Tree planting dates are listed below. Volunteers must be 18 years old or older or alternately 12 years or older and accompanied by a parent/legal guardian. Tools and heavy equipment will be used and all volunteers must be able to safely use hand tools, stay on their feet for 2 hours at a time and lift a moderate weight (~25 pounds). Find more information about tree planting dates and registration links at Tree-Corps.org.



- Tree Prep Workday- April 7 (9-11:30am)
- Mike Hall Tree Project with ParkLands Foundation- April 8 (9-11:30am & 12-2:30pm)
- Tree Prep Workday- April 14 (9-11:30am & 12-2:30pm)
- Tree Planting Workday at BNWRD- April 15 (9-11:30am & 12-2:30pm)
- Mike Hall Tree Project with ParkLands Foundation- April 16, 2023 (9-11:30am & 12-2:30pm)

World Water Day—March 22, 2023

The United Nations adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015, to act as a blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet. The key components of the 2030 Agenda are 17 Sustainable Development Goals. These goals built upon decades of global sustainable development work, and “recognize that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests.”¹

This year, World Water Day, created by the UN in 1993 to raise awareness about the world's water crisis, is highlighting a serious lack in progress towards Goal 6, to “ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all”.

We are fortunate that we have access to clean water and sanitation in our community. This can make it difficult to realize there is a water crisis in much of the world. Out of our global population of roughly 8 billion people, 2.2 billion do not have access to clean water. Over the past 300 years, over 85% of the planet's wetlands have been lost. For at least 3 billion people, the quality of water they depend on is unknown due to a lack of monitoring. Meeting the drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene targets of the 2030 Agenda requires a four-fold increase in the pace of progress.²

It might seem like these issues are beyond our reach, but water affects us all, and this World Water Day (and every day) the UN is asking everyone to take action. The UN developed a great list of suggestions we can adopt into our daily routines.³ The more of us that participate, the greater difference it will make.

The good news is, the EAC can help you with several of the suggestions, and we can all work together to protect and conserve our local water.



- **Conserve Energy - 90% of power generation is water intensive.** The EAC's BN Energy Bright Program provides energy efficiency tips and home energy audits to reduce unnecessary energy usage.
- **Take part in clean-ups of your local rivers, lakes, wetlands or beaches.** The EAC's Earth Day Sugar Creek and Constitution Trail Clean-up event is next month! You can register at ecologyactioncenter.org. You can also volunteer to be a Sugar Creek Steward and our monthly workdays, helping improve the health of Sugar Creek. Do your own neighborhood or park clean-up! We have trash grabbers available at the back door of the EAC that anyone can borrow. You can also put a group together to do some Storm Drain Stenciling! This is a fun activity that helps us educate our community about ways to prevent storm water runoff pollution.

¹ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs | Sustainable Development; sdgs.un.org/goals

² United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs | Sustainable Development | Goal 6; sdgs.un.org/goals/goal6

³ United Nations | The Lazy Person's Guide to Saving the World; un.org/sustainabledevelopment/the-lazy-persons-guide-to-saving-water/

World Water Day continued...

- **Be Curious! Find out where your water comes from and how it is shared, and visit a treatment plant to see how local waste is managed.** Visit the EAC's watershed website mcleanwater.org to learn about our local watersheds, threats to water quality, and strategies for water protection.
- **Protect Nature. Plant a tree or create a rain garden – use natural solutions to reduce the risk of flooding and store water.** The EAC has several tree planting days this spring. Dates and registration at ecologyactioncenter.org. Our rain barrel workshops are returning next month. Capturing rainwater reduces storm water runoff, and conserves treated water since you can water plants with captured water instead of water from the spigot. Our resources at yardsmart.org include information about rain gardens and other garden and lawn care practices to reduce storm water runoff.

Check out un.org/sustainabledevelopment/the-lazy-persons-guide-to-saving-water for more tips from the UN on ways to protect and conserve water! How many of these are you already doing? What new activities can you add to your routine?

There are tools at unwater.org/bethechange to create your own water action list, share it with friends, family, colleagues, on social media, and let the UN know you are committed to be the change for this World Water Day and beyond!

Workshops to Help Your Garden Bloom

Dreaming of spring? We are too! Be prepared for the upcoming gardening season by signing up to attend one of the EAC's rain barrel or backyard composting workshops!

The EAC is holding two in-person rain barrel workshops: April 19, 5:30-6:30pm and April 22, 3-4pm. Rain barrel workshops cost \$45 for general public and \$38 for EAC members. Register online at ecologyactioncenter.org/bngreenevents. These workshops will give you the confidence to install, use, and care for your rain barrel. You can also tell your friends, family, and neighbors about the impact your rain barrel has on preventing storm water runoff pollution.

The EAC is also hosting two in-person backyard composting workshops: Thursday April 13, 7:30-8:30pm and Saturday April 22, 1:30-2:30pm. Workshops will cover the basics of backyard composting. The workshop costs \$10 for the workshop and composter made from a repurposed 55-gallon drum or \$85 for the workshop and composter plus a thermometer and stirrer which is used to keep out invasive jumping worms. Register online at ecologyactioncenter.org. By the end of these workshops you will have all the tools and knowledge you need to make your garden bloom!



Women and the Environment

March is Women's History Month, and is a great time to highlight the relationship between women and the environment. Sociologists and scientists have determined that globally, women and girls bear the brunt of environmental degradation. These disproportionate impacts are a result of gender inequality, as women have less access to resources and decision-making power. On average, women across the world have less economic, legal, political, and social power than men.

Economically disadvantaged women and children are up to 14 times more likely to be killed by a climate-fueled disaster than their male counterparts. There are a variety of factors that make women and children more vulnerable to climate disasters. Women are often the primary caregivers for children, the elderly and family members with poor health, it is difficult for them to evacuate during emergencies. Additionally, in many countries, social conventions create barriers for women to move freely and independently within their community. When they are able to escape a disaster, displaced women face an increased risk of gender based violence like domestic violence, sexual exploitation, and trafficking¹.

In many regions, women bear a disproportionate responsibility for securing food, water, and fuel, and Agriculture is a primary employment sector for women in developing countries. Women produce 60-80% of household food in most developing countries, yet they are considered assistants, not farmers. With increasing severity of drought and erratic rainfall, women are working even harder to secure income. This puts added pressure on girls, who often leave school to help their mothers manage the increased burden. As land degradation continues, women lose even more financial independence since the farmed land is predominantly owned by men and is generally transferred inter-generationally to the first-born male. In Africa, women have access to only 1% of available credit in the agricultural sector.

In order to combat these disproportionate vulnerabilities, and address environmental issues simultaneously, it is vital that women play an integral in creating solutions. Research shows increasing women's representation in governments leads to lower emissions³. The United Nations cites that "at the local level, the participation of women in natural resource management is associated with better resource governance and conservation outcomes". Statistics also show that expanding women's access to productive resources would increase farm yields would rise by 20 to 30 percent, alleviating hunger for over 100 million people³.

In central Illinois, there are great examples of women leading in the environmental sector. From Dr. Sandra Steingraber, an ISU and IWU graduate and Tazewell County native, who is well known for her novel *Living Downstream*, to Jen Walling, the Executive Director of the Illinois Environmental Council, to Dr. Catherin O'Reilly, and ISU professor who served on the 2007 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Here at the EAC, three of our four full-time staff are women working diligently to make our local environment better for all who live and will live in McLean County.



¹ CARE International. (2020). *Evicted by Climate Change: Confronting the Gendered Impacts of Climate-Induced Displacement*. <https://careclimatechange.org/evicted-by-climate-change/>

² USAID. *Food Security and Gender*. <https://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development/46460857.pdf>

³ UN Women. (2022). *Explainer: Why Women Need to be at the Heart of Climate Action*. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news-stories/explainer/2022/03/explainer-why-women-need-to-be-at-the-heart-of-climate-action>



PO Box 97
Normal, IL 61761-0097
ecologyactioncenter.org
309-454-3169



Printed on Recycled, Chlorine-Free Paper, Of Course!

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Staff

Board of Directors 2021–2022

Michael Brown
Executive Director

Larissa Armstrong
Assistant Director

Katie Vogler
Education Coordinator

Kelsey Bremner
Program Assistant

Ryan Barfoot
Program Assistant

Deborah Pitcher
Development Director

Elizabeth Randerson
Administrative Assistant

Nathan Bair
Stewardship Coordinator

Eric Marshall
Program Assistant

Mike O'Grady
President and Ex-officio
McLean County

Carl Teichman
Past President

Jay Ivers
Vice President

Nancy Armstrong
Treasurer

Charles Bristow
Secretary

Kevin Koethe
Ex-officio Bloomington

Jason Comfort
Ex-officio Normal

Hannah Eisner

Tim Golliday

Myra Gordon

Steve Kowalski

Joan Brehm

Kari Sandhaas

Vince Allen

Elisabeth Reed

Ben Ryburn

George Gordon

Wayne Aldrich

Goverdhan Galpalli

Rachael Lund

Laurie Wollrab

Kevin Callis



**Bloomington
Normal Water
Reclamation District**