



The Ecology Action Center—2010 Annual Report



## From the Desk of the Executive Director

We at the EAC are grateful for another year of tremendous support. While times were tough for many, our members and our community continued to give and to support the many programs and efforts of the Ecology Action Center. Among the most notable gifts this year was a \$5,000 contribution from the State Farm corporate office after their internal Green Neighbor Challenge. The Securities Products Department won the challenge with a paper-saving condensed report and chose the EAC to receive a \$5,000 grant among other area nonprofits.

Another notable success was the Sustainable Gourmet, the EAC's annual fundraiser featuring an organic wine-tasting and hors d'oeuvres from local foods. The EAC welcomed a new partnership with Medici in Uptown Normal for this year's event which proved to be very beneficial. The great service, selection of incredible foods and wonderful wines, and beautiful atmosphere all made for a very pleasant event. The sold-out attendance and very popular silent auction items made this year's event the most successful ever. To top it off, a generous donor matched the earnings of the silent auction, effectively doubling the proceeds.

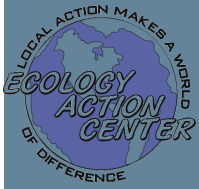
2010 also saw growth in other new partnerships; EAC staff have been reaching out and participating in more ways with other community organizations, serving on the board of directors of the ParkLands Foundation, the statewide Illinois Recycling Association, and the McLean County Community Compact. In addition, thanks to a USEPA grant administered through the Illinois Emergency Management Agency, the EAC is now home to the McLean County Radon Awareness Program. Under this new program area, the EAC will facilitate awareness of Radon and promote home testing and mitigation.

Of course, solid waste education is still our largest program area. In 2010 we successfully negotiated the renewal of our contract with the City of Bloomington, Town of Normal, and McLean County to provide solid waste education and a community solid waste coordinator in order to meet solid waste planning requirements mandated by the State of Illinois.

I would like to thank our funders, our generous members and contributors, the many participants in our programs, events, workshops, and classes, and all of our community partners for the role each of you played in our successes.

Sincerely,

Michael Brown  
Executive Director



## McLean County Solid Waste and Recycling Education Program Report

Provided **Earth Schools Recycling and Waste Reduction Programs** to fourth grade classrooms at 17 elementary schools in McLean County, reaching 1,098 students and their teachers.

Provided **After-School Recycling Programs** to 11 schools and community organizations in McLean County, ranging from elementary to high schools, reaching over 640 students and their teachers.

Conducted **Recycling and Waste Reduction Presentations and Programs** to more than 41 different organizations, including the Boy and Girl Scouts, First United Methodist Church, State Farm, 4-H Clubs, and more, reaching over 1,290 students and community members.

Provided **Informational Recycling Display Booths** at 16 different community events, including Sugar Creek Arts Festival, Sweet Corn Blues Fest, Bloomington Cultural Fest, and more, reaching over 2,000 community members.

Provided recycled craft activities at multiple area events including YWCA Peace Camp and the Soil and Water Conservation District Conservation Day, reaching 452 participants.

Presented **“Garbage Monster” waste reduction/recycling programs** to 6 groups, reaching 422 individuals.

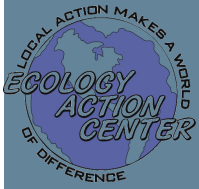
Hosted three **“Free 4 All” Events promoting finding homes for unneeded items** (including one as part of the Illinois Sustainable Living and Wellness Expo), reaching 900 community members.

Provided summer **library reading programs** about waste issues at 11 locations reaching 543 children.

Provided programs and hands-on workshops on **composting and vermicomposting** including “build-your-own” composter workshops, reaching 30 individuals.

Provided waste-oriented programs at the Children’s Discovery Museum including special programs for **Earth Day** and **America Recycles Day**, reaching over 1,154 participants.

Promoted America Recycles Day through electronic billboard and county-wide elementary student art and poetry contest and recycling competition between schools.



## Solid Waste and Recycling Education (Continued)

Ongoing administration and promotion of the local **Compact Fluorescent Lamp (CFL) recycling program, Household Battery Recycling Program** (13.4 tons recycled—more than twice as much as 2009), and the **Illinois Plastic Pot Recycling Initiative**. Successfully transitioned Household Battery Recycling program to a more cost effective service provider to further extend limited grant dollars for this residential waste recycling program.

Awarded the 2010 **McLean County World of Difference Award** and the **McLean County Recycling and Waste Reduction Award** to recipients for their outstanding efforts to improve our local environment.

Fulfilled responsibilities of **Solid Waste Coordinator for McLean County** including:

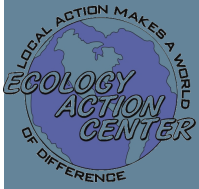
- Organized, facilitated, and took minutes of all meetings of the Solid Waste Technical Committee
- Coordinated McLean County Schools recycling grants program
- Coordinated McLean County small municipality recycling grants programs resulting in \$3,500 in grants awarded
- Conducted annual survey of waste haulers, recyclers, and major businesses to determine county-wide rate of municipal solid waste generation and recycling rate for reporting to Illinois EPA
- Assisted in review process for permitting new pollution control facility
- Provided review and letters of support for local solid waste projects and grant applications
- Ongoing efforts to get a household hazardous waste collection event to central Illinois

Conducted a **recycling and waste assessment**, including audit of residential waste streams in Bloomington and Normal, a survey of community residents regarding usage and understanding of local recycling programs, and a survey of small business owners to gauge current recycling practices.

Produced **quarterly newsletter** with focus on solid waste and clean water issues and distributed around McLean County—1,200 hard copies distributed and also available as free download from EAC website.

Produced and distributed fall and spring **teacher's newsletter "Talking Trash"** with content on waste reduction; sent electronically to all McLean County Schools for distribution to teachers.

**Frequent updates of area recycling information** at [www.earth911.org](http://www.earth911.org) and [www.ecologyactioncenter.org](http://www.ecologyactioncenter.org).



## McLean County Solid Waste and Recycling Education Program Report (Continued)

Operated **walk-in information center** for 40 hours a week and answered phone and email inquiries about the disposal of household hazardous waste and recycling (420 inquiries about recycling programs, 300 inquiries about Household Hazardous Waste, and 300 inquiries about electronics recycling).

Coordinated the **Affordable Fashion Challenge** as part of the Illinois Sustainable Living and Wellness Expo to encourage the reuse of textiles as a means to reduce waste and conserve resources. Held three hands-on workshops and ultimately had twenty-six participants compete in the final event with their recycled fashion entries.

Administered **McFreecycle**, a free list serve for the free exchange of usable items to reduce waste. Facilitated migration of entire listserv from Yahoo Groups to the more functional custom built Freecycle.org site.

Notified 615 households by email of the lack of a **Household Hazardous Waste Collection Event** due to ongoing state budget cuts. EAC promoted alternative disposal and recycling of items which have local disposal options while also promoting reduction in generation of household hazardous wastes.

Promoted recycling at area special events through recycling equipment loans and assisting with recycling.

Promoted recycling, waste reduction, composting, and proper disposal of household hazardous wastes through interviews with the local media resulting in seven stories on WJBC, WGLT, WMBD, and the Bloomington Pantagraph.



## McLean County Stormwater Education Report

Provided **Third Grade Clean Water Educational Programs** at 17 different Bloomington-Normal elementary schools, reaching 1,302 students.

**Scout badge programs** provided for area scout groups, including emphasis on clean water issues.

**Clean Water presentations** provided for 14 different organizations such as ISU ecology students and Central Illinois Water Garden Club, including topics such as stormwater runoff, Yard Smart program, rain barrels, and rain gardens, reaching 310 individuals.

**Clean Water and Yard Smart information** provided at 12 area events, reaching approximately 2,030 individuals.

Held six **“build-your-own” rain barrel workshops** resulting in construction of 67 rain barrels to reduce stormwater runoff. EAC additionally sold 19 ready-to-use rain barrels at events throughout the year.

Utilized a small grant from the Illinois Rain Garden Initiative Program to **install a demonstration rain garden and rain barrels at Davis Lodge** on Lake Bloomington. Also designed interpretive signage explaining stormwater runoff pollution and homeowner strategies for water protection.

EAC sponsored and promoted Bloomington-Normal screening of Sandra Steingraber’s documentary film *Living Downstream* focusing on clean water issues.

Development in progress on local watersheds forum website to act as clearinghouse of local information on watershed issues



## McLean County Stormwater Education Report (Continued)

Promoted Yard Smart program and reduction of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides that contribute to stormwater runoff through multiple means:

- Annual **Yard Smart Garden Walk** featuring yards that utilized Yard Smart concepts with 45 individuals participating
- **Rain Barrels and Rainwater Harvesting class** at Master Gardeners' Home, Lawn, and Garden Day with 22 students
- **Information booth on Yard Smart, rain barrels, and vermicompost** at Master Gardeners' Home, Lawn, and Garden Day, ISU Fell Arboretum Plant Sale, and Sugar Grove Nature Center Plant Sale, reaching approximately 345 individuals

Nine stormdrain stenciling workdays coordinated in Bloomington, Normal, and McLean County with 123 volunteers contributing 351 hours of labor; 667 inlets were stenciled and 3603 informational door hangers explaining the problem of storm water runoff and ways to reduce it distributed to households in the stenciled neighborhoods (see map on next page).

Promoted awareness of stormwater runoff pollution and strategies to prevent it through media including:

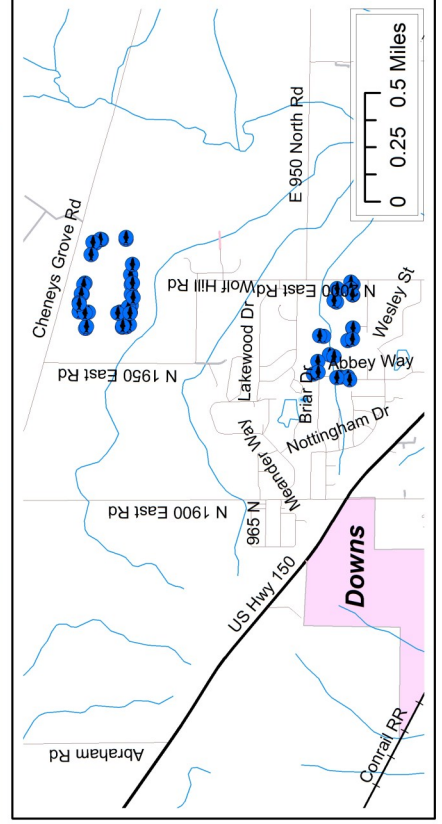
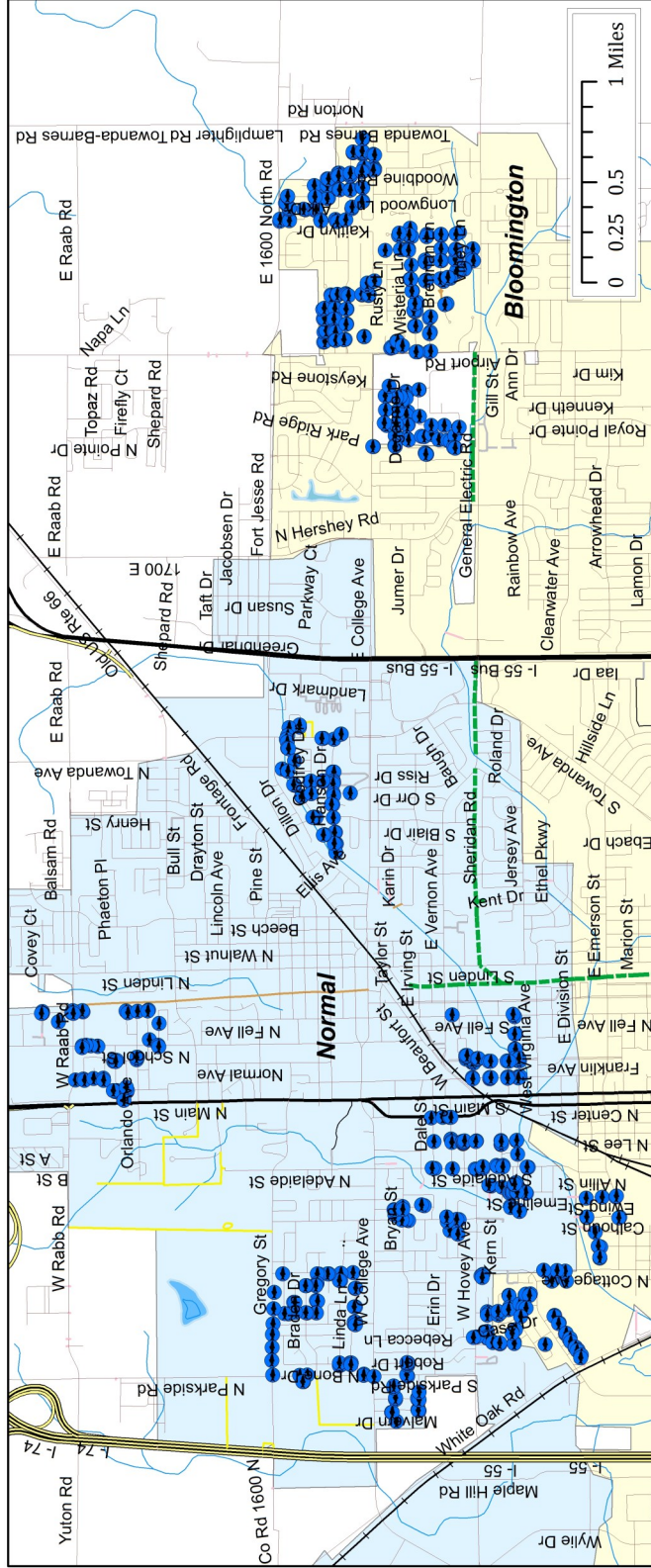
- Spring advertisements on four local radio stations (WGLT, WJBC, WBNQ, WBWN), reaching thousands of listeners
- Creation of stormwater runoff video hosted on YouTube.com
- Interview on WMBD TV morning show focusing on stormwater runoff and rain barrels
- Bloomington Pantagraph front page feature story on Davis Lodge demonstration rain garden and rain barrels
- EAC featured on WGLT's Uncommon Knowledge program focusing on stormwater runoff pollution

Participated in ongoing efforts of the Evergreen Lake and Lake Bloomington Watershed Plans Implementation Committee.

Facilitated McLean County Greenways Advisory Committee as chair.

Answered **268 phone and email inquires** about clean water issues, Yard Smart program, and rain barrels.

# 2010 Storm Drain Stenciling



**Legend**

- 2010 Stormdrain Inlets
- Creeks and Streams
- Municipalities
  - Bloomington
  - Normal
  - Downs

Includes a north-south compass rose.





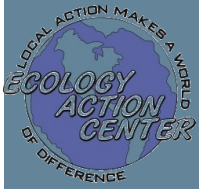
## Illinois Sustainable Living and Wellness Expo

The Ecology Action Center organized and promoted the annual Illinois Sustainable Living & Wellness Expo in partnership with Illinois Wesleyan University Wellness, which took place April 10. The event included 70 different exhibitors and 11 presenters covering topics about the many aspects of sustainability and wellness with many focusing on clean water issues. Activities included a children's carnival, local and organic food, the Affordable Fashion Challenge, presentation of the 2010 McLean County World of Difference Award and the McLean County Recycling and Resource Conservation Award, and a special presentation by IWU alum Jay Truty, founder of Ecosystem Capital on market-based conservation finance strategies. The Expo was held on the Illinois Wesleyan campus, and approximately 1,200 people attended.

Some of the exhibitors present were Heartland Community College, McLean County Health Department: Tobacco Education/Cessation, Beautification Committee of the City of Bloomington, Eco-Lawn Organics, Energistics Energy Auditing, The Mended Hearts/American Heart Association, and McLean County Master Gardeners.

The expo included a special screening of No Impact Man, the documentary of Colin Beavan's experiment in reducing the environmental footprint of his family for one year in New York City.

Workshop presentations included sessions on multiple topics, including Financing Solar and Wind Projects, Greener Homes—Healthier Kids, Frugal Gardening, Energy Efficiency in your Existing Home, Greener Grass—Less Carbon, and more.



## Education & Membership Activities

Produced a quarterly **members' newsletter** with up-to-date environmental issues and news, which is distributed to over 300 members, local businesses, and government officials.

Maintained and updated our **web page** on a regular basis and provided an **online newsletter**. The website contains information on recycling and waste reduction, clean water, energy conservation, and sustainable living. We also maintained a separate website for the Illinois Sustainable Living & Wellness Expo to promote the event and facilitate registration of exhibitors and workshop presenters.

In 2010 the Ecology Action Center expanded its usage of Facebook and Twitter to reach the community. With over 400 followers, these outreach tools proved to be a useful complement to traditional means. Adding to this success, the EAC is now starting to utilize other web-based media such as YouTube, Flickr, and LinkedIn to reach our audience.

Held three week-long Eco-Action **summer camps** at Comlara Park through the Normal Parks and Recreation program with 36 participants.

Provided **phone answering services** for JWP Audubon, Parklands Association, and Friends of the Kickapoo Creek.

Provided **volunteer coordination**, which allowed us to support our programs and work with many students to provide information about the environment to the local community. This service provided opportunities for 9 college interns in a wide variety of majors. Volunteers and interns together logged a total of 2,000 hours of service.

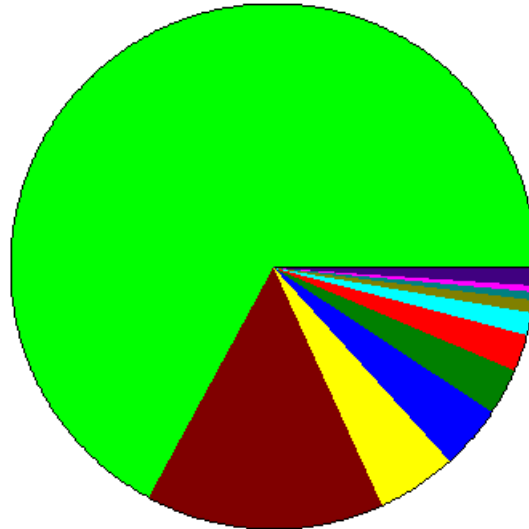
Conducted **fundraisers** to help support our mission throughout the year, such as the Sustainable Gourmet, netting over \$3,800, and sales of practical ecological merchandise helped support our mission. Prairie Rain Harvester rain barrels sales netted \$450 while Eco-Lawn Organics Vermicompost netted \$248 and our new EcoCups saw \$225 in profit.

Held monthly "**Green Drinks**" **networking and discussion group**. As part of an international movement, this group provides an opportunity for environmentally-minded individuals to informally meet and discuss environmental issues and other topics.

Provided Energy Efficiency education reaching approximately 500 individuals through energy bike programs, participation in the Illinois Energy Expo, Mid-Central Community Action's Energy Workshop, and more.

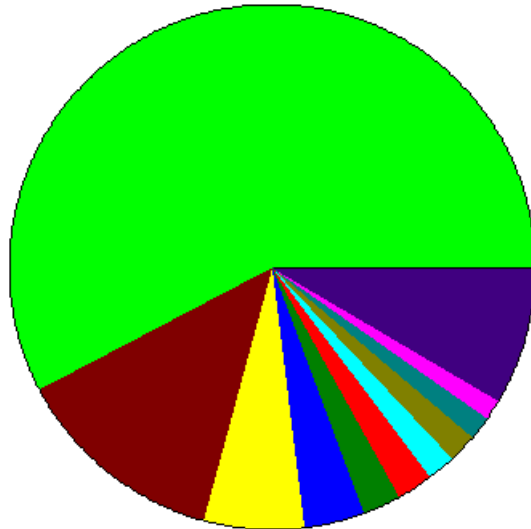
## 2010 Financial Information

Income Summary  
 January through December 2010



Program Fees	%67.19
Grants	14.79
Membership Dues	5.07
Contributions Income	4.02
Fundraiser proceeds	2.90
Merchandise Sold	2.28
Reimbursed Expenses	1.58
Interest Income	0.80
Sponsorships	0.57
Advertisements	0.38
Other	0.42
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$191,924.51</b>

Expense Summary  
 January through December 2010



Payroll Expenses	%57.83
Battery Program	13.20
Supplies	6.35
Printing and Reproduction	3.69
Office Equipment	2.51
Insurance	2.37
Advertising	1.91
Professional Fees	1.87
Utilities	1.49
Telephone	1.30
Other	7.50
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$160,442.20</b>



## 2010 Board of Directors

The Ecology Action Center Board of Directors is composed of members and ex-officio representatives from the City of Bloomington, the Town of Normal and the McLean County Board. The board is responsible for providing governance and direction for the organization, as well as assisting in leadership and promoting the Ecology Action Center to support the organization's mission and needs.

Kari Sandhaas - President  
Nancy Armstrong- Vice President  
Carol Schmidt- Treasurer  
Charles Bristow - Secretary  
Robin Weaver - Ex-officio Normal  
George Kutz - Ex-officio Bloomington  
George Gordon- Ex-officio McLean County  
Bonnie Bernardi  
Charlotte Brown  
Enid Cardinal  
Deb Dirks  
Myra Gordon  
Julie Elzanati  
Missy Smock  
Shari Bowman  
Carl Teichman  
Amy Endicott  
Arti Kamatar

## Staff

Michael Brown - Executive Director  
Kris Hall - Assistant Director  
Mikki Bell - Environmental Educator  
Larissa Armstrong - Program Assistant  
Ruth Ann Lipic - Radon Program Coordinator