

# STORM WATER EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR BLOOMINGTON-NORMAL & MCLEAN COUNTY 2022 ANNUAL REPORT



THE ECOLOGY ACTION CENTER COMPLETED THE FOLLOWING TASKS AS PART OF THE STORM WATER EDUCATION AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROGRAM AGREEMENT OF FEBRUARY 1, 2019.

## **2022 TOTAL REACH: 240,998 INTERACTIONS**

DIRECT (PROGRAMS, EVENTS, PHONE INQUIRIES): 1,172

MEDIA (NEWSPAPER, RADIO, SOCIAL MEDIA, WEB): 239,826

### **3<sup>RD</sup> GRADE CLEAN WATER CLASSROOM PROGRAMS**

- EAC provided clean water education programs to 13 third grade classrooms in Bloomington, presenting to 250 students at 5 schools.
  - Pepper Ridge Elementary School; 2 classes, 38 students
  - Cedar Ridge Elementary; 4 classes, 76 students
  - Trinity Lutheran Elementary; 2 classes; 27 students
  - Corpus Christi Elementary; 2 classes, 45 students
  - Bent Elementary; 3 classes, 64 students
- EAC provided clean water education programs to 8 third grade classrooms in Normal, presenting to 143 students at 4 schools.
  - Colene Hoose Elementary; 3 classes, 49 students
  - Northpoint Elementary; 1 class, 19 students
  - Northpoint Elementary; 3 classes, 56 students
  - Thomas Metcalf Elementary; 1 class, 19 students
- EAC provided clean water education programs to 9 third grade classrooms in McLean County, presenting to 185 students at 3 schools.
  - Tri Valley Elementary School; 4 classes, 81 students
  - Heyworth Elementary; 3 classes, 63 students
  - Hudson Elementary; 2 classes, 41 students

### **EDUCATIONAL EVENTS – COMMUNITY-WIDE**

- Staff presented to 42 congregants at New Covenant Community Church on engagement opportunities, including opportunities for congregants to participate in clean water activities like storm drain stenciling and Sugar Creek Stewards.

- Presented about clean water virtually to 54 fifth grade students from three classrooms at Sheridan Elementary school.
- Presented about water pollution and stormwater runoff to 16 kids at the Children’s Discovery Museum’s Earth Day Camp.
- Project Oz borrowed trash grabbers to do community clean-up projects with 25 youth.
- Annual Trail and Creek Clean-up Event had 20 volunteers picking up 35 full bags of trash along the Constitution Trail from the Chateau to Audubon Gardens.
- Presented about water pollution and storm water runoff to a group of 8 at the Danvers Public Library.
- Provided a water pollution activity to a group of 10 first, second, and third graders as part of District 87’s Summer School
- Provided a water pollution activity to a group of 24 youth at the Western Avenue Community Center Summer Camp.
- Provided a summer reading program at the Heyworth Public Library to 70 attendees. Talked about water pollution and explained how water treatment plants work.
- Answered questions and shared information about the Yard Smart program, and clean water practices to 32 residents during the Glorious Garden Festival.
- Provided information about upcoming storm drain stenciling opportunities to 14 residents during the Interfaith Green Team Meeting.
- Presented to 30 city managers from around Illinois about how the EAC assists the municipalities in reaching and going beyond MS4 permit requirements.
- Shared information with 12 attendees of the Sweet Corn Circus about Yard Smart and Sugar Creek Stewards volunteer opportunities.
- Answered questions and shared information about Yard Smart and upcoming rain barrel workshops to 40 visitors at the Nature Trails Day Event at Sugar Grove Nature Center.
- Presented to Chris Miller’s Sustainability and Renewable Energy class at Heartland Community College, consisting of 11 students and one instructor, about the EAC’s clean water programing.

## 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 eight volunteers removed invasive plants and spread native plant seed at Ewing Park II.
  - In May, eight volunteers worked along the creek at Ewing Park II planting over 60 new native forbs, shrubs, and trees in areas previously cleared.
  - In September, four volunteers worked at Ewing II in Bloomington, removing invasive plants and spreading native plant seeds.

- In November workday two volunteers helped remove invasive plants and spread native plant seed at Ewing Park II in Bloomington.
- Normal
  - In January one volunteer helped seed the area cleared at Fairview Park in Normal.
  - In April, two volunteers seeded and removed weeds in the area along the creek at Fairview Park in Normal.
  - In June, two volunteers removed teasel at Fairview Park in Normal.
  - In August, two volunteers worked at Fairview Park removing invasive plants and spreading native plant seeds.
  - In October three volunteers helped remove invasive plants and spread native plant seed at Fairview Park in Normal.
  - In December five volunteers worked to remove invasive plants and spread native plant seed at Fairview Park in Normal.



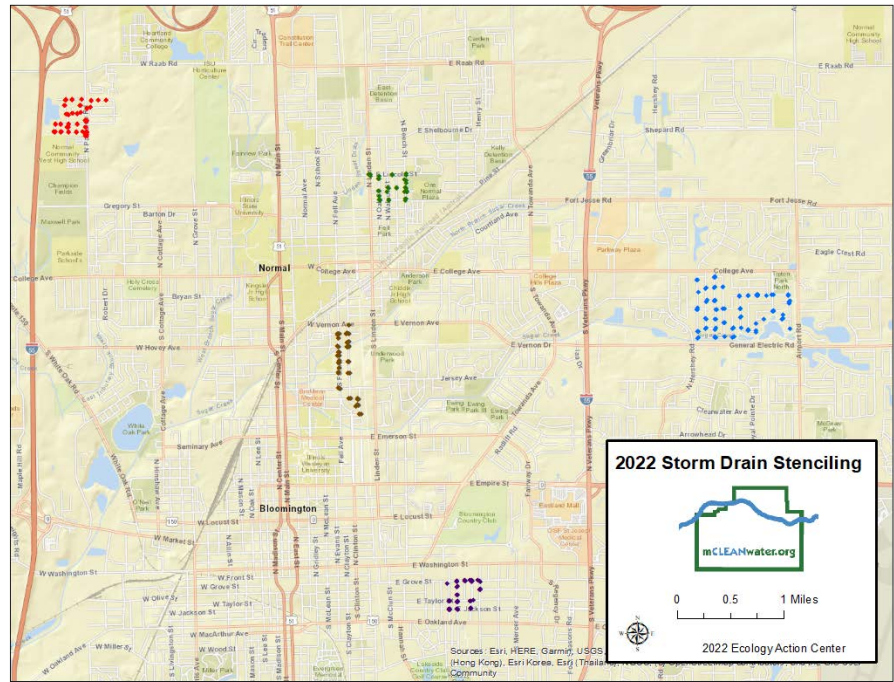
## STORM DRAIN STENCILING

The Ecology Action Center welcomes groups of volunteers to participate in storm drain stenciling in the community. Volunteers spray stencils next to storm drains that say "Drains to Stream, Keep it Clean", marking every stenciled drain with a GPS tracker, and distributing door hangers in the neighborhood that educate residents on what storm water pollution is and ways households can reduce their contributions to it.

- Bloomington
  - 7 volunteers from State Farm stenciled 57 storm drains and distributed 176 door hangers around the Founders Grove neighborhood in Bloomington.
  - 15 volunteer Boy Scouts from Troop 19 stenciled 106 drains and distributed 389 door hangers throughout the Tipton Park neighborhood.
- Normal
  - 6 volunteers from Paul Mitchell school stenciled 44 storm drains and distributed 166 door hangers on Fell and Broadway between Vernon and Division streets.
  - 6 volunteers stenciled 38 storm drains and distributed 135 door hangers around the Beech street in Normal.



- o 10 volunteers from Heartland Community college stenciled 38 storm drains and distributed 231 door hangers on Mariana and North Parkside in Normal.



## YARD SMART PROGRAM

The Ecology Action Center promotes gardening and lawn care practices that reduce storm water runoff and the need for chemical fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides. In the spring and summer the EAC offers rain barrel workshops and hosts an annual Yard Smart Garden Walk. Extensive time went into re-creating these events and educational programs to comply with COVID-19 social distancing and “stay-at-home” restrictions.

- Rain Barrels
  - o The EAC held one fall rain barrel workshop with five participants.

- Yard Smart Garden Walk
 

The EAC held its annual Yard Smart Garden Walk on August 6, 2022. This year’s event had 46 attendees. Participants visited the home gardens of Paula & Roger Wager of Normal, Marie-Suzanne Langille & David Vayo of Bloomington, and Rose & Peyton Johnson of Bloomington. The tour also featured The Herb Guild garden on the Constitution Trail at Atwood Wayside. The garden walk featured native plant landscaping, water catchment, a



garden scavenger hunt with fresh vegetables for prizes, and a chemical free garden for Edwin, the free-range Sulcata Tortise.

The garden walk concluded with a presentation from the U of I Extension about bats and a zero-waste vegan lunch from Under the Ground BloNo.



## COMMUNITY-WIDE OUTREACH EFFORTS

- Social Media
  - Weekly Facebook #WatershedWednesday posts educated the public about clean water issues reaching 103,981 people.
  - Weekly Twitter #WatershedWednesday posts educated the public about clean water issues reaching 6,073 people.
- EAC Newsletter
  - The July e-newsletter was sent to 1,497 households and featured an article promoting the upcoming Yard Smart Garden Walk.
  - The August e-newsletter was sent to 1,497 households and featured an article promoting Sugar Creek Stewards workdays.
  - The September member newsletter was mailed to 283 donors and featured articles about rain barrel workshops and storm drain stenciling opportunities.
  - The November newsletter was sent to 1,499 households and featured articles on proper rain barrel winterization and information on ways to keep fallen leaves out of storm drains.
  - A special EAC New Year's Resolutions newsletter was sent to 1,489 households and featured many ways to keep our local waterways clean in 2023.
- Websites [ecologyactioncenter.org](http://ecologyactioncenter.org) and [mCLEANwater.org](http://mCLEANwater.org)
  - The EAC promoted clean water issues and strategies for water protection through its resource-rich websites, receiving 19,410 visits.
- Radio Promotions
  - Radio Bloomington
    - WJBC interview with Todd Weinburner about Yard Smart reached 1,000 listeners.
    - WJBC interview with Todd Weinburner about how storm water pollution can have negative impacts on drinking water like the noticeable earthy flavor of



Bloomington's water, and how activities like rain barrel workshops and storm drain stenciling helps combat that. Reached 1,000 listeners.

- WJBC Interview with Tod Weinburner about proper fall leaf management focusing on reminding residents to curb their leaves to prevent storm water runoff pollution reached 1,000 listeners.
- Ran promotions on WJBC, WBWN, and WBNQ reminding 75,000 weekly listeners to curb their leaves to prevent storm water runoff pollution.
- WGLT
  - Ran promotions on WGLT reminding 25,000 weekly listeners to curb their leaves to prevent storm water runoff pollution.
- Answered 79 direct inquiries from visitors, calls, emails, and social media comment and direct messages about the Yard Smart program, rain barrels, and other storm water issues.