

STORM WATER EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR BLOOMINGTON-NORMAL & MCLEAN COUNTY 2023 ANNUAL REPORT



THE ECOLOGY ACTION CENTER COMPLETED THE FOLLOWING TASKS AS PART OF THE STORM WATER EDUCATION AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROGRAM AGREEMENT OF DECEMBER 1, 2022.

2023 TOTAL REACH: 164,474 INTERACTIONS

DIRECT (PROGRAMS, EVENTS, PHONE INQUIRIES): 2,153

MEDIA (NEWSPAPER, RADIO, SOCIAL MEDIA, WEB): 169,621

3RD GRADE CLEAN WATER CLASSROOM PROGRAMS

- EAC provided clean water education programs to 26 third grade classrooms in Bloomington, presenting to 536 students at 10 schools.
 - Pepper Ridge Elementary School; 2 classes, 41 students
 - Stevenson Elementary School; 3 classes, 52 students
 - Corpus Christi Catholic School; 2 classes, 47 students
 - Trinity Lutheran School; 2 classes, 41 students
 - Cornerstone Christian Academy; 2 classes, 29 students
 - Cedar Ridge Elementary; 3 classes, 65 students
 - North Point Elementary School; 4 classes, 92 students
 - Sheridan Elementary School; 3 classes, 55 students
 - Washington Elementary School; 2 classes, 46 students
 - Bent Elementary School; 3 classes, 68 students
- EAC provided clean water education programs to 20 third grade classrooms in Normal, presenting to 424 students at 9 schools.
 - Epiphany Catholic School; 2 classes, 33 students
 - Grove Elementary School; 4 classes, 96 students
 - Oakdale Elementary School; 3 classes, 65 students
 - Sugar Creek Elementary School; 2 classes, 35 students
 - Bloom Community School; 1 class, 16 students
 - Fairview Elementary School; 2 classes, 41 students
 - Calvary Christian Academy; 1 class, 20 students
 - Colleen Hoose Elementary; 3 classes, 72 students
 - Thomas Metcalf; 2 classes, 46 students
- EAC provided clean water education programs to 6 third grade classrooms in McLean County, presenting to 130 students at 2 schools.
 - Hudson Elementary School; 2 classes, 50 students
 - Tri Valley Elementary School; 4 classes, 80 students

EDUCATIONAL EVENTS – COMMUNITY-WIDE

- A January Facebook live EAQ presented information regarding proper winter ice and snow removal techniques with a focus on storm water runoff pollution in the winter.
- Staff presented to 23 educators at the ROE 17 History and Social Science Symposium about the EAC's environmental education programs (such as the classroom clean water program), volunteer opportunities (such as Sugar Creek Stewards and Storm Drain Stenciling), and on the importance of integrating environmental education into current curriculum.
- Staff spoke to 21 students interested in internships and/or volunteer work at the EAC at the Illinois Wesleyan University Internship Fair.
- Staff presented to 18 homeschool students in the Homeschool Friends group about the water cycle and how they can prevent storm water runoff pollution.
- Staff presented to 33 Illinois State University Environmental Economics Students about EAC program offerings such as Sugar Creek Stewards, Storm Drain Stenciling, and Tree Corps.
- Presented on ways to Green Your Office at the Illinois Assessors Conference, including information on environmentally sustainable lawn care practices to conserve water. Presented to 12 people.
- Information booth at the Master Gardener's Home Lawn & Garden Day with information about Yard Smart, Rain Barrel Workshops, and composting. Spoke with 63 people.
- Presented to 13 homeschoolers (adults and children aged 5 years old-6th grade) about water pollution and the water cycle.
- Talked to 7 Carle-Bromenn employees about volunteering with Sugar Creek Stewards, Trash Pickup Day, and Storm Drain Stenciling at their Volunteer Fair.
- Talked to 40 people about the EAC's programs including clean water programs. Discussed upcoming Sugar Creek Stewards Workdays.
- Spoke with 73 visitors at the McLean County Chamber of Commerce Twin City Showcase about volunteer opportunities such as Storm Drain Stenciling, Sugar Creek Stewards, and Trash pick-up.
- Engaged with 44 people at the EAC's table at the Second Presbyterian Earth Care Fair. Talked about yard smart, rain barrels, and storm drain stenciling volunteer opportunities.
- Seventeen volunteers cleaned up the Constitution Trail from the Chateau to Audubon Gardens; collected 30 bags of trash.
- Engaged with 56 people at the EAC's information table at ISU's NutriFest. Talked to them about rain barrels and the upcoming rain barrel workshops.
- Spoke with 8 residents at a Yard Smart Gardening Class we held in partnership with Heartland Community College's Continuing Education program. The class focused on yard smart gardening techniques.
- Talked about clean water strategies and the water cycle to twenty 6th grade ESL students at Chidix Jr. High.



- Had 2 participants for attend the presentation Green TOPics: Learn How to be Yard Smart where EAC staff discussed Yard Smart garden techniques.
- Discussed aquifers, where local drinking water comes from, the water cycle, and how pollutants get in local waterways with 25 students at the YMCA Summer Camp.
- Spoke with 48 residents about Yard Smart gardening techniques at the Glorious Garden Festival.
- Had a booth at Pride fest where 163 festival goers engaged in environmental trivia questions about waste reduction, clean water, clean air, energy, and environmental justice.
- Talked to 82 ISU students and faculty about recycling and volunteer opportunities including tree corps and storm drain stenciling at Festival ISU.
- Presented to 4 people about fall leaf management practices, stresses to watersheds, and general EAC clean water programming at the last installment of GREEN TOPics, a lecture series with Green Top Grocery.
- Fifteen Students at Denver's Public Library read the novels Riperia's River and Magic School Bus Wet All Over: A Book About the Water Cycle and learned about the amount of water in the world, how aquifers work, and ways to prevent pollution.



SUGAR CREEK STEWARDS

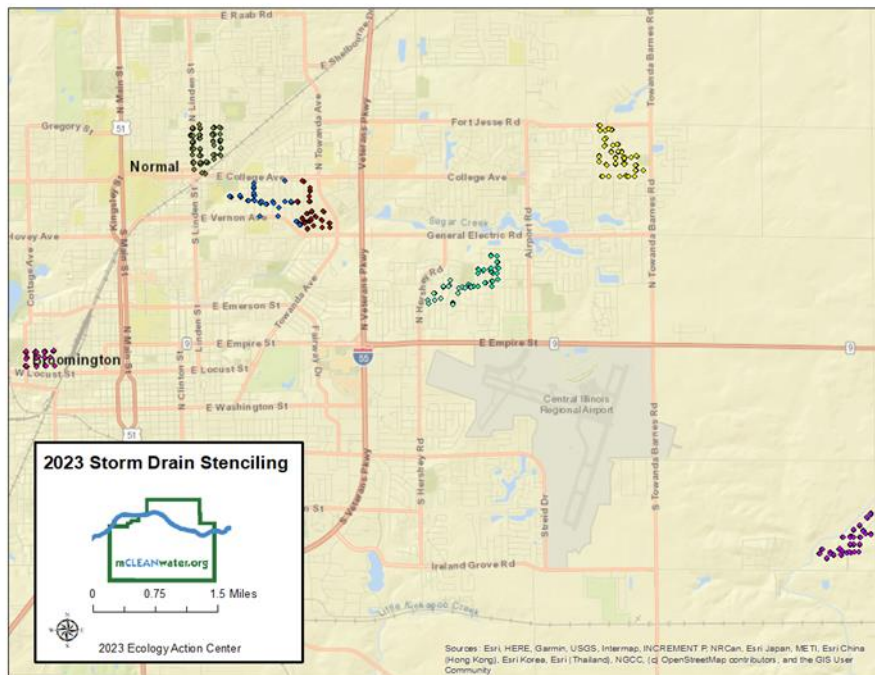
Sugar Creek Stewards is designed to raise awareness about Sugar Creek as an important community storm water system and ecosystem. The EAC works with volunteers at designated sites to improve the overall health and aesthetics of Sugar Creek through invasive species control and removal, allowing native species to thrive.

- Bloomington
 - In January, five volunteers worked to clear and treat large swaths of invasive honeysuckle at Ewing Park II in Bloomington.
 - In March, fourteen volunteers worked at Ewing Park II in Bloomington removing invasive honeysuckle.
 - In May, eight volunteers worked to clear and treat large swaths of invasive honeysuckle at Ewing Park II in Bloomington.
 - In September, twenty-one volunteers worked at Ewing Park II in Bloomington removing invasive honeysuckle.
 - In November, twelve volunteers worked to clear and treat large swaths of invasive honeysuckle at Ewing Park II in Bloomington.

- Normal
 - In February, fifteen volunteers worked at Fairview Park in Normal removing and treating invasive plants such as honeysuckle.
 - In April, twelve volunteers worked at Fairview Park in Normal removing invasive plants such as honeysuckle.
 - In June, three volunteers worked at Fairview Park in Normal removing invasive honeysuckle.
 - In August, nine volunteers worked to clear and treat large swaths of invasive honeysuckle at Fairview in Normal.
 - In October, eighteen volunteers worked at Fairview park in Normal removing invasive honeysuckle.
 - In December, four volunteers removing invasive plants such as honeysuckle 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
 - Four volunteers stenciled 38 storm drains and distributed 112 door hangers around Sheridan Elementary School.

- Eleven volunteers stenciled 86 storm drains and passed out 218 door hangers around Walt Bittner Park.
- Ten volunteer stenciled around Clearwater Park in Bloomington. They stenciled 58 drains and distributed 157 door hangers.
- Thirteen Boy Scouts stenciled near Benjamin Elementary School in Bloomington, handing out 195 flyers and stenciling 63 storm drains.
- Normal
 - Thirteen ISU students stenciled 85 storm drains and distributed 169 door hangers from Linden to Beech street near campus as part of the Bring It Back to Normal volunteer day.
 - Twelve Boy Scouts stenciled 47 storm drains and handed out 283 door hangers near Colleen Hoose Elementary School.
 - Nine community members and Boy Scouts stenciled 53 drains and handed out 194 door hangers between East College Avenue and East Vernon Avenue.

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.

- Rain Barrels
 - The EAC held 9 rain barrel workshops totaling 40 participants who took home their own rain barrels made from repurposed 55-gallon drums.
- Yard Smart Garden Walk
 - The Annual Yard Smart Garden Walk was held on Saturday, July 8 with 52 attendees. The walk visited 3 homes in west Bloomington, and 2 homes in Normal. All of the yards featured wide use of native plants in the landscaping, and spaces for wildlife, particularly birds. The EAC worked with the JWP Audubon to feature gardens that provide refuge for birds. The garden walk ended at One Normal Plaza with lunch from Under the Ground BloNo and a presentation on creating space for birds by Bill Davison, an avid birder and JWP Audubon member.



COMMUNITY-WIDE OUTREACH EFFORTS

- Social Media
 - Weekly Facebook #WatershedWednesday and #WildlifeWednesday posts educated the public about clean water issues and animals sightings recorded for the Normal Creek Wildlife Project. These posts reached 83,902 people.
 - Weekly Twitter #WatershedWednesday posts and #WildlifeWednesday posts educated the public about clean water issues and animals sightings recorded for the Normal Creek Wildlife Project. These posts reached 2,977 people.

- EAC Newsletter
 - The January monthly issue of the EAC Action News email newsletters was sent to 1,487 email addresses to educate residents on the impacts of road salt and winter storm water runoff.
 - The first quarter EAC member newsletter featured articles related to creek clean up events, World Water Day, Sugar Creek Stewards, upcoming rain barrel presentations, and the connections between women and the environment. Mailed to 292 households in March.
 - The April monthly issue of the EAC Action News email newsletter was sent to 1,468 email addresses to educate residents about the Yard Smart program.
 - The May monthly issue of the EAC Action News email newsletter was sent to 1,494 email addresses to educate residents on how to garden with native plants.
 - The second quarter EAC member newsletter featured articles related to the upcoming Yard Smart Garden Walk. Mailed to 302 households in June.
 - The August issue of the EAC Action News email newsletter was sent to 1,505 email addresses to educate residents about upcoming rain barrel workshops and leaf management practices presentations.
 - The October issue of the EAC Action News email newsletters was sent to 1,908 email addresses to inform recipients about proper fall leaf management and the problems associated with flushable wipes.
 - The November issue of the EAC Action News email newsletter was sent to 1,903 email addresses detailing information about rain barrel weatherization and letting leaves and other plants stay where they are for insect and animal habitats over winter.
 - A special December issue of the EAC Action News email newsletter was sent to 1,891 email addresses about green holiday gifts available at the EAC such as rain barrels.
 - The third quarter EAC member newsletter featured articles related to being salt smart in the winter. Mailed to 313 EAC Members in December.

- Websites ecologyactioncenter.org and mCLEANwater.org
 - The EAC promoted clean water issues and strategies for water protection through its resource-rich websites, receiving 16,939 visits.
- Radio Promotions
 - Radio Bloomington
 - Interviewed with Todd Wineburner on WJBC about the Sugar Creek Stewards program, sharing information about the importance of storm water system health and how people can volunteer to help reaching approximately 1,000 listeners.
 - Interviewed with Todd Wineburner on WJBC about the Sugar Creek Stewards program, sharing information about the importance of storm water system health and invasive plants found around Sugar Creek reaching approximately 1,000 listeners.
 - Interviewed with Todd Wineburner on WJBC about the Yard Smart Garden Walk, sharing information about what it means to be Yard Smart and details on the upcoming educational garden walk reaching approximately 1,000 listeners.
 - Interviewed with Todd Wineburner on WJBC about upcoming workshops and storm drain stenciling volunteer days reaching approximately 1,000 listeners.
 - Interviewed with Todd Wineburner on WJBC about the importance of curbing your leaves and focusing on other leaf alternatives reaching approximately 1,000 listeners.
 - Ran promotions on WJBC on curbing leaves, letting leaves lie where they fell, and composting fallen leaves to prevent storm water runoff pollution reaching approximately 7,300 people.
 - Interviewed with Todd Wineburner on WJBC about green Christmas gift ideas like rain barrels reaching approximately 1,000 listeners.
 - WGLT
 - Ran promotions on WGLT on curbing leaves, letting leaves lie where they fell, and composting fallen leaves to prevent storm water runoff pollution reaching approximately 15,000 listeners.
- Print Ads
 - Celebrated Earth Day with a full-page advertisement in the Pantagraph promoting EAC programs and services. This ad reached 19,250 print readers.
 - Ran a promotion in the Pantagraph about leaf management to prevent storm water runoff pollution which reached 21,500 people.
- Answered 73 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.
- Applied and received a storm water microplastics filters grant through the Council of the Great Lakes Region.

