

# TREE CORPS INITIATIVE FOR BLOOMINGTON-NORMAL & MCLEAN COUNTY



## ANNAUL 2023 REPORT

THE ECOLOGY ACTION CENTER HAS COMPLETED THE FOLLOWING TASKS AS PART OF THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TOWN OF NORMAL, THE CITY OF BLOOMINGTON, MCLEAN COUNTY, AND BLOOMINGTON-NORMAL WATER RECLAMATION DISTRICT.

### TREE PLANTING PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

#### Tree Planting

Tree planting traditionally occurs during the spring season.

- 3 tree saplings (shingle oak, chinkapin oak, and pagoda dogwood) planted on a Sugar Creek Riparian restoration site.
- Planted 13 tree saplings at the Interstate Center as part of West Bloomington Free Tree program to improve air quality.
- Began planning for spring 2024 plantings, meeting with potential planting site partners.

#### Tree Maintenance

- Regular watering (when rainfall is inadequate) to maintain the Route 66 tree saplings. This routine consists of hauling a 1,000-gallon water tanker (borrowed from a local farmer) to water the tree bags surrounding the new sapling plantings. The tanker must be filled three times to water the two-mile stretch, amounting to approximately 3,000 gallons of water delivered per week to the trees.
- Approximately 3 miles of invasive removal and weed maintenance through pruning and push mowing on Route 66.
- Constructed Jefferson Street Nursery.
- 40 tree saplings ordered and picked-up from Spring Grove Nursery then delivered to and maintained at the Jefferson St. Nursery.
- Around 2,000 tree seedlings weeded and watered weekly at the Jefferson St. Nursery.
- 6 cubic yards of mulch hand delivered to the Jefferson St. Nursery to use for weed control, overwintering, and to hold for spring tree sapling plantings.
- Installed signs at the Parklands Mohr Tract and at the Mike Hall project.
- Continued to maintain over 2,000 trees at the Jefferson St. Nursery
- Pick-up, delivery, and installation of 4 yards of mulch for tree saplings at the Jefferson St. Nursery.
- Watered tree saplings for the Interstate Center and Bloomington Housing Authority (BHA).

#### West Bloomington Free Tree Program

As part of the Tree Corps initiative to plant 10,000 trees a year in McLean County, the Ecology Action Center is providing free native tree saplings to income-qualifying residents of West Bloomington.

- Purchased and acquired 40 native tree saplings for the program.
- 100 Free Tree program pamphlets distributed to West Bloomington local businesses and Uptown Normal.
- Partnered with Habitat for Humanity to send 200 residents' information about the West Bloomington Free Tree Program.
- Delivered and installed 21 tree saplings for WBFT program.
- Ran an advertisement about the WBFT program on WJBC reaching 7,300 residents.
- Planted 5 trees for the (BHA).
- Planted 3 trees for residents of West Bloomington.
- Contacted 10 requestees of free trees.
- Distributed 30 Tree-Corps pamphlets to tree requestees.

## COMMUNITY-WIDE OUTREACH EFFORTS

### Social Media

- Facebook posts educated the public about the Tree Corps program and how to properly care for trees reaching 2,079 people.

### Websites [ecologyactioncenter.org](http://ecologyactioncenter.org) and [tree-corps.org](http://tree-corps.org)

- The Ecology Action Center promoted tree planting benefits, projects, and programs that had 2,830 visits to the sites.

### Newsletters

- Sent the October monthly issue of the EAC Action News email newsletter to 1,908 email addresses to educate residents on West Bloomington Free Tree Program.
- Sent a November monthly issue of the EAC Action News email newsletter to 1,903 email addresses to educate residents on proper tree pruning.

### Other Educational Programs, Presentations & Information Booths

- Talked to 82 ISU students and faculty about recycling and volunteer opportunities including tree corps and storm drain stenciling

Direct inquiries through phone calls, emails, and social media received from 11 individuals.

## FUNDING

- **Illinois Prairie Community Foundation**
  - Applied for a \$5000 grant for the West Bloomington Free Tree Program in 2024.
- **Nicor Stewardship Grant**
  - EAC received a \$5000 grant for the West Bloomington Free Tree Program.