



# The Ecology Action Center News

Spring 2010

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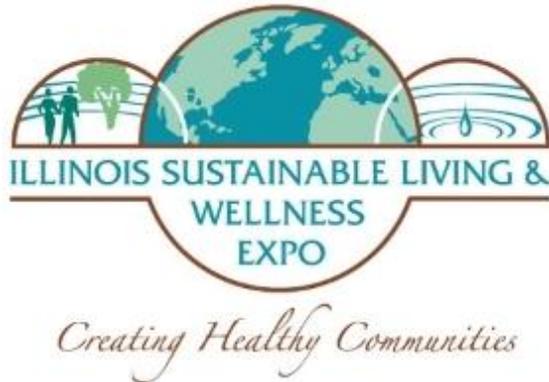
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9 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Monday—Friday

## Illinois Sustainable Living and Wellness Expo 2010 -Alana McGinty, EAC Intern



*Wellness and sustainability* are two terms that we hear increasingly in recent years. Their exact definitions often change depending on who you ask. At the EAC we see wellness as the process of becoming aware of and acting on choices that will have a positive influence on our life encompassing many areas of our well-being from social to spiritual. We see a focus on sustainability as being conscious of our usage of resources and aware of our impacts on the environment, with an emphasis on

considering the needs of current and future generations. The inextricable connection between wellness and sustainability is what brings us together again for the annual Illinois Sustainable Living and Wellness Expo (ISLWE)!

This April 10th from 9 am to 5 pm at Illinois Wesleyan University Shirk Center people from all over Illinois will gather to learn, share, and enjoy the expo! Businesses and organizations that represent a diverse range of sustainability and wellness issues will share information through exhibits and workshops. An added bonus is that this event is free and open to the public!

Living well and living green come together at this year's expo themed "Creating Healthy Communities." At this interactive event you can enjoy locally grown foods, see a glass blowing demonstration by a local artisan, and learn a new dance all in one day! ISLWE brings together a diverse group of local businesses and organizations who can help you in creating a healthy community for yourself, your family, and those around you!

Take advantage of our exciting featured events such as the Kid's Eco-Carnival, the Freecycle Free-4-All, or the Affordable Fashion Challenge. This alternative fashion show competition promotes the reuse of textiles and materials as a way to reduce waste and preserve natural resources, all while encouraging creativity and thriftiness in fashion! Create trendy fashions for pennies on the dollar by recycling fabric into fashions and enter into the Affordable Fashion Challenge! Enjoy our featured documentary 'No Impact Man' as it follows the story of Colin Beavan who along with his family made it their goal to eliminate their personal impact on the environment for one year. Their impact reduction plan included everything from not consuming electricity, to eating vegetarian, local, seasonal foods, and creating no waste. Follow the amazing story of Colin's adventures in reducing his impact on the earth.

ISLWE can provide you with the resources and knowledge of how you can combine wellness and sustainability in your own life. Our wide variety of activities, events, exhibitors, and workshops throughout the day will offer you entertainment, learning opportunities, and fun! Hope to see you there!

For more event information, check out [www.islwe.org](http://www.islwe.org).



# Spring at the EAC

## EAC Staff

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Director

Michele Bell  
Environmental  
Educator

Kris Hall  
Environmental  
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## Protect Our Local Water Supplies -Erin Spear, EAC Intern

In undeveloped areas, water from precipitation seeps into the ground to replenish the watershed. As communities like Bloomington-Normal grow, more and more impervious materials such as pavement cover the permeable ground. These materials prevent the natural processes of water filtration and absorption from occurring. Instead, this stormwater is collected via a series of storm drains located along our streets. It is then discharged unfiltered into rivers, streams, and other bodies of water inhabited by plants and animals and potentially used for swimming or drinking water.

As the stormwater flows over impervious surfaces and through storm drains it can collect any number of pollutants, some of the most common being fluids leaking from cars, fertilizers and pesticides from gardens, litter, and other contaminants. These pollutants can harm plants and animals in the ecosystems where the water is discharged. They can also affect the quality of our drinking water. Since many of our daily activities can affect the quality of stormwater, we must be careful about our actions. A few simple changes on our part can reduce the pollution entering water bodies via storm drains.

So what can you do? For one, don't litter and avoid dumping anything down storm drains. Dispose of used paints, antifreeze, oil and other household chemicals properly, not on the street. Always dispose of waste appropriately and if possible, always recycle. The Ecology Action Center website provides much information on how to properly dispose of many items. Avoid using synthetic chemicals on your lawn and garden; instead use alternatives that are more ecologically sound. Check out the "Yard Smart" section of the EAC website for some suggestions and for other methods of making your yard more environmentally friendly. Finally, as the weather gets warmer and you use the hose for washing cars, watering lawns or recreation, try to direct water away from the street and instead, toward permeable surfaces like your lawn.

We don't always think about the final destination of stormwater our activities can influence its quality, but as the snow from this winter melts and it begins to rain, try to remember these simple suggestions to reduce stormwater pollution. If we all pitch in and reduce our impact, our water can be a lot cleaner for native plants and animals, and for us.

## The Eco Cup



The Ecology Action Center is excited to announce our newest eco merchandise has arrived - the *Eco Cup*! This is a high quality reusable porcelain coffee cup for drinks to-go. With the Eco Cup, there is no more wasteful disposable coffee cups, no plastic taste or leaching of plastic chemicals into your beverage. The Eco Cup is now available at the EAC for \$10. Profits from the sales of these Eco Cups help support the operations of the Ecology Action Center.



# Reduce, REUSE, Recycle

## Mini "Freecycle Free-4-All"

In the tradition of the Ecology Action Center's semi-annual Freecycle Free-4-All, we will be giving you an opportunity to give away your unwanted stuff and take what you like—FOR FREE at the 2010 Illinois Sustainable Living and Wellness Expo! Here are the rules:

### Free-4-All Household Items Giveaway:

- Please Bring: knick-knacks, lamps, vases, paintings, prints, etc
  - Items must be clean and in good condition
- Please do NOT bring large furniture, clothing, or electronics to give away at this event.

### Free-4-All Toy Giveaway:

- Please bring gently used toys
- Toys must be clean and in good condition
- No toys with missing parts or pieces



Please bring household items or toys that deserve a second life to the IWU Wellness Office or the Ecology Action Center by April 5 or bring your items directly to the Freecycle Free-4-All table at the expo. Please contact us with questions at [www.ecologyactioncenter.org/about/contact.shtml](http://www.ecologyactioncenter.org/about/contact.shtml). The Ecology Action Center's Spring Freecycle Free-4-All is scheduled for June 12th and will offer you the opportunity to give away just about anything you have—including clothes.

**Don't throw  
it away!  
Freecycle it!**

For more information about ReStore, visit their website: [www.habitatmclean.org](http://www.habitatmclean.org).

1403 W Washington St.  
Bloomington  
(309) 454-6047  
Hours:  
Wed-Fri: 10am - 5pm

For more information about acceptable donations to Old House Society, visit their website: [www.oldhousesociety.org](http://www.oldhousesociety.org).

214 E Douglas St.  
Bloomington  
(309) 820-0548  
Hours:  
Wed, Fri, Sat: 8am - 5pm



## Building Materials Reuse

- Alana McGinty, EAC Intern

Unwanted building materials are created in the process of constructing new buildings, or in the demolition or remodeling of an existing building. Annually in the United States

325 million tons of building materials that could be reused or recycled enter our landfills (Construction Materials Recycling Association).

Sustainable ways of dealing with these unwanted or excess materials include: reusing, recycling, or through more sustainable construction and demolition practices such as deconstruction. In McLean County there are several ways to reuse building materials or household appliances.

- Habitat for Humanity ReStore takes donations of all kinds. From household appliances in good condition, to extra wood from a remodeling project they are committed to providing the residents of McLean County quality, affordable housing.
- A resource for the community, Old House Society provides homeowners who are remodeling or rebuilding an antique home an opportunity to salvage and donate their unwanted materials to the Old House Society Warehouse.



There are many benefits associated with reusing your building materials. *Environmental benefits:* reduces unnecessary waste going into landfills. *Economic benefits:* waste from construction and demolition can be costly to dispose of. Donating or reusing materials saves money! *Doing Good in the Community:* By donating your unwanted building materials to a local non-profit, you are giving others the ability to repair or upgrade their home at an affordable cost.



# Energy Efficiency Made Easy



Practical advice for  
your green journey.

*It's all in the  
lighting!*

*The right and  
easy way to  
do energy  
efficiency!*

## ***How do I choose the right energy-efficient light bulbs?***

***- Rebecca Rossi, Green Irene***

When it comes to energy-efficient lighting, many consumers, filled with good intentions, have carted an armload of new light bulbs home, only to see that each bulb presented a different problem – not fitting in non-traditional lamp sockets or under the shades, emitting a cold light reminiscent of a hospital, having to warm up for minutes before being suitable, or not working in a dimmer switch. Choosing to swap incandescent light bulbs for compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) and other energy-saving technologies is one of the easiest and most effective steps toward going green, but can be confounding unless you know what you are purchasing.



### **Why should I make the switch?**

CFL bulbs use 75% less energy than incandescent bulbs and last more than 10 times longer. While CFLs have a higher purchase price, the energy savings from the decreased energy use and increased life of the bulbs are substantial.

Assuming a cost per kilowatt of 11 cents (the average rate in Illinois, according to the U.S. Department of Energy), replacing 50 incandescent bulbs in a medium-sized home can save more than \$2300 over the life of the first set of energy-efficient bulbs.

### **Do I have to use those weird spiral bulbs?**

Most people associate CFLs with a curly-q shape, but bulbs come in a variety of styles. The trick is matching the bulb to the task. Generally, spiral fluorescent bulbs are ideal in fixtures allowing airflow such as lamps, pendants and wall sconces. However, if your lamp or fixture reveals part of the bulb or if the shade fits onto the bulb, you can purchase CFLs that are covered to look like a standard incandescent. Flood CFLs are designed for recessed fixtures and cast light evenly on your task area. Globes can be used in vanity strips found over bathroom sinks, or in hanging pendant lamps. Standard CFLs do not work on dimmer switches, but special dimmable CFL bulbs are available, as are bulbs for three-way sockets, outdoor use, and for chandeliers and decorative lighting.

While CFLs are currently the highest performing bulbs available at the most reasonable cost, Light-emitting diode bulbs (LEDs) are another energy-saving option. LEDs use 80% less electricity than comparable incandescents, last 25 times longer (25,000 hours or more) and are manufactured without mercury. They are relatively expensive and are not available for the same wide range of applications as CFLs, but are becoming very popular for use in decorative lighting, chandeliers, or night-lights.

### **Isn't light cast by CFLs very harsh and bright?**

The light produced by CFLs falls in a range of colors. The most desired color, described as “soft white” or “warm white” (around 2,700 Kelvin or “K”), will bring out natural color tones and is ideal for kitchens, bathrooms and home offices.

(Continued on page 5)

“Bright white” (around 4,100K), a cold or bluish white, produces a clean light good for garages, basements and some reading lamps. While it may be tempting to purchase the bulb labeled “daylight” (5,000K) or “natural”, this light is best for commercial spaces such as galleries, stores and restaurants.

**How worried should I be about mercury in CFLs?**

A single CFL bulb contains about 5mg of mercury, though premium, very low-mercury CFLs are also available. To put this in perspective, old “under the tongue” thermometers contained 500mg of mercury. When a CFL is in use and intact, no mercury is released. For disposal, the EPA recommends recycling old CFLs. Some national chains, like Home Depot, recycle CFL bulbs for free. If a CFL breaks, simply air out the room, carefully sweep the pieces into a plastic bag, and throw it away.

**Bulbs can’t make a big enough difference!**

While it’s true that we have a lot of work to do on the energy conservation front, changing your light bulbs is one pretty easy place to start. After you switch to CFLs, commit to kick your other efficiency practices up a few more notches. Choose to use the lowest wattage needed for a task, as that saves energy as well. Add task lights to desks, tables and night stands so that if you are working at your desk or reading, the entire room isn’t illuminated. Incorporate more daylight into your home by opening blinds or installing solar tubes. Once you begin to incorporate these changes into your life, build on your success by finding other, more challenging energy saving opportunities to tackle!

If you’d like to receive a free guide to energy-efficient lighting, energy conservation ideas or are interested in actually seeing different types of energy-efficient bulbs in your home, send me an e-mail. I’d be happy to help you learn more about savings that will have a positive impact on both your wallet and our world.

*This article was provided by your local Green Irene Eco-Consultant, Rebecca Rossi. Rebecca helps the Central Illinois community implement proven green solutions in local homes and business. Contact Rebecca at [rebecca.normal@greenirene.com](mailto:rebecca.normal@greenirene.com), or visit [www.greenirene.com/RebeccaNormal](http://www.greenirene.com/RebeccaNormal) to begin identifying and achieving your green lifestyle and business goals.*



**"Green Drinks" Discussion Group**

The first Tuesday every month we gather local green supporters of all sorts for great conversation on green topics. Whether you are independent, progressive, leftie, green elephant, or tree-hugger you will enjoy this great time! No need to sign up, just show up, get yourself a beverage whether it be espresso, or an espresso stout, and join us for “Green Drinks” the first Tuesday of every month at 5:30 pm at Medici in Uptown Normal! Hope to see you there!



Recycle the Ecology Action Center Newsletter by passing it on to someone else after you have read it.



202 W. College Ave. Normal, IL 61761

[www.ecologyactioncenter.org](http://www.ecologyactioncenter.org)

To Email Visit

[www.ecologyactioncenter.org/about/contact.shtml](http://www.ecologyactioncenter.org/about/contact.shtml)

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## Calendar of Upcoming Events

**March 27, 8:30-9:30 pm: Earth Hour** World-wide be part of the movement—turn off your lights for an hour! Visit [www.myearthhour.org](http://www.myearthhour.org) for more information.

**April 6, 5:30 pm: Green Drinks Discussion Group** at Medici in Uptown Normal. See page 5 for more details.

**April 10, 9 am to 5 pm: Illinois Sustainable Living and Wellness Expo** at Illinois Wesleyan University Shirk Center. Check out [www.islwe.org](http://www.islwe.org) for details.

**April 22: Earth Day** Do something extra for the environment! For simple, fun ideas visit [www.earthday.net](http://www.earthday.net).

**June 12: Freecycle Free-4-All.** Call 309-454-3169 for more information.

**June 26: Yard Smart Garden Walk.** Call 309-454-3169 for more information or to sign up.

*The Ecology Action Center's 2009 Annual Report is now available on our website. Download it from [www.ecologyactioncenter.org](http://www.ecologyactioncenter.org) to learn more about our efforts to inspire and assist residents of McLean County in creating, strengthening, and preserving a healthy environment.*