



The Ecology Action Center News

Spring 2012

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Free Screening of "Living Downstream" Documentary at Expo!

Kris Hall, Assistant Director

The Normal Theater was nearly sold out last year for the central Illinois premier of "Living Downstream." This amazing film adaptation of Sandra Steingraber's book is now scheduled to be shown again in central Illinois—this time as a free feature of the Illinois Sustainable Living and Wellness Expo at IWU's Shirk Center. Please join us on April 14 for this great opportunity.

To any random audience in any locale, this film is a poignant journey of discovery. But what makes it so relevant to an audience in central Illinois is the local connection.

"When Sandra Steingraber was a student at Illinois Wesleyan she amazed her professors with her overall brilliance, her skill in writing, and dedication to Biology," according to retired professor Jim McGowan. She grew up in Tazewell County, and many of the stories told in her book and film are about our area. The proliferation of man-made chemicals which were introduced after World War II was supposed to make our lives better. But as Dr. Steingraber's story unfolds, we see that agricultural and industrial chemicals found their way into our environment: into the air we breathe and the water we drink. Proving the links between these chemicals and cancer, and sharing her findings with the world, has been a lifelong project for Dr. Steingraber.

When asked to describe the film, former EAC Director Anne McGowan said "[It] weaves together current data with her personal life and feelings about the landscape which nourished her... and the cruel irony that this loved land also subjected her body to cancer as an undergraduate student here at Wesleyan. She hopes to push us past contemplation to action, as citizens, to block currently-allowed toxins from continuing to accumulate in our atmosphere and soil."

"Living Downstream" is a beautiful and moving film. Sandra Steingraber truly is an eloquent messenger of a tale we all need to hear.

Ecology Action Center Seeks Nominations for McLean County Green Awards

The Ecology Action Center wants to know who is making a difference in McLean County. Nominations for the World of Difference Awards and the Recycling and Waste Reduction Awards are now being accepted. The recipients of these awards will be announced on April 14 at the Illinois Sustainable Living and Wellness Expo held at the Shirk Center at Illinois Wesleyan University.

These annual awards recognize outstanding projects, activities, or individuals in McLean County that promote environmental awareness or conserve natural resources. Any business, organization, school, or individual may be nominated for either award.

Applications are available online at www.ecologyactioncenter.org or by stopping by the Ecology Action Center at 202 W College Avenue in Normal; all submissions are due by March 31, 2012.

Ecology Action Center
202 W. College Avenue
Normal Illinois 61761
Phone: (309) 454-3169
Fax: (309) 454-7508

www.ecologyactioncenter.org

9 am to 5 pm
Monday—Friday



Upcoming Events

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Executive Director

Kris Hall
Assistant Director

Larissa Armstrong
Program Assistant

Ruth Ann Lipic
Radon Program
Coordinator

Gary Kamplain
Program Assistant

Dane Rasmussen
Program Assistant

Sarah Hinch
Administrative
Assistant

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ISLWE, 2012

By Renee L. Niederkorn, EAC Intern

The Illinois Sustainable Living and Wellness Expo is almost here! Mark your calendars for April 14th and get ready to explore the many aspects of living well and living green at Central Illinois' first ZERO WASTE event. Enjoy secure valet-style bicycle parking and join us for a day of learning and fun at Illinois Wesleyan University's Shirk Center.

From 9 am–4 pm we'll be holding a Mega Recycling Event, where you can bring your hard to recycle items—electronics, household batteries, clothing, textiles, and shoes (usable or not), Compact Fluorescent Bulbs, and plastic garden pots—to be properly recycled. No hazardous wastes, chemicals, paints or large appliances will be accepted. In addition to the Mega Recycling Event, ISLWE will have free document shredding available.

This year, the Affordable Fashion Challenge is getting a makeover. In previous years, the AFC has invited area residents to create new garments out of old or outdated textiles. The 1012 ISLWE will feature the RENEWABLE Fashion Challenge. The change acknowledges the fact that not only is re-purposing clothing affordable, it's also a way to stretch our planet's limited resources.

Raw materials and energy that went into producing the original cloth and shipping the original garment are saved by, instead, using existing clothing or other textiles to create a new garment. There are fashion categories for all ages, as well as separate categories for accessories and home décor.

Items will be judged in the "Green is the New Black" fashion show held at the expo, but the deadline for entries is on March 22nd. More information on participating and the online application can be found at the ISLWE website at www.islwe.org.

ISLWE will be a great place for bike-lovers this year. There will be free Valet Bicycle Parking provided by *WGLT Good To Go* and *Friends of the Trail*. Also, members of *West Bloomington Revitalization Project* will be available from 10 am–1 pm to inflate tires to proper level for optimum riding, adjust brakes, oil chains, install training wheels, and replace tires/tubes. There is no charge for these services, and they will be provided on a first come first serve basis.

If you have any bikes that have been outgrown, or simply are not needed, *Working Bike Cooperative* will be collecting them at the Expo so that they can find a new home. These bikes do not need to be in working condition. This organization collects and ships over 6,000 used bicycles a year to non-profit projects in developing countries.

This year, many aspects of ISLWE focus on the effects of hazardous waste on the environment and on our lives, so we're especially excited for the screening of *Living Downstream*, a feature-length documentary based on the acclaimed book by locally-educated ecologist and cancer survivor Sandra Steingraber, Ph.D.

It's not too late for businesses to be a part of ISLWE! The Ecology Action Center is still accepting applications from potential exhibitors and presenters at the expo website.

There's something for everyone at ISLWE, so join us on April 14th and find out what the expo has to offer you. For updates on key events, exhibitors, and workshops, visit the expo website at www.islwe.org.



Going the Extra Mile

Earth Hour

By Elizabeth Drehmel, EAC Intern

On Saturday March 31st between 8:30-9:30pm, the Sixth Annual Earth Hour will take place. Earth Hour in Bloomington-Normal involves cooperative action in order to make the community more green and sustainable. During Earth Hour, we are asking you to shut off any non-essential lights and equipment in a symbolic effort to raise awareness about the impact of excessive energy use and how it contributes to global climate change. We want to encourage both families and businesses to participate in this year's Earth Hour in order to make a joint effort to work towards reducing greenhouse gases.



Climate Change is a huge global issue we are facing today and it affects both people and the environment. The main greenhouse gases contributing to global warming and climate change are Carbon Dioxide and Methane gas. Since 1900, the concentration of Carbon Dioxide in our atmosphere has risen from 290 parts per million (ppm) to 400 ppm, and scientists predict that we could see an increase to 1260 ppm by the end of the 21st Century.

Without a decrease in emissions, we could be facing serious consequences in the coming years. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, climate change is resulting in more severe weather, warming of the earth's temperature, raising of the oceans due to the melting of the polar ice caps, and the destruction of wildlife. Scientists believe that if the earth were to warm 2 degrees more, it would result in an unstoppable chain of events. If we do not prevent this from happening in the next 50 years, it is predicted that 1/3 of all land animals will become extinct. It is so important to reduce energy and carbon emissions, and the participation of the community can help us to further reduce our ecological footprint and stop climate change.

To get more information, visit www.earthhour.org. If your businesses, organization, or family are participating on March 31, please let us know. Send an email to edrehmel@ecologyactioncenter.org.

“Climate Change is a huge global issue we are facing today and it affects both people and the environment”

Zero Waste and ISLWE

By Renee L. Niederkorn, EAC Intern

This year's Illinois Sustainable Living and Wellness Expo will be here before you know it! On April 14th, the Ecology Action Center and Illinois Wesleyan University will be hosting Central Illinois' first Zero Waste event. But what does "Zero Waste" mean, exactly?

Most of us don't think about the amount of waste we generate daily, but our use of paper, materials that we cannot (or do not) recycle, food scraps, and wasted clean water all add up. According to the EPA, the average American produces nearly enough garbage to outweigh a fully-grown male African elephant.

Zero Waste is about making sure ISLWE adds as little as possible to that weight.

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ISLWE 2012

“Our Zero Waste goal is to ensure that ISLWE and its participants walk the walk, so to speak.”

ZERO WASTE *continued from page 3*

The EAC, along with the vendors and exhibitors of this year’s ISLWE, will go beyond recycling in order to reduce—if not eliminate—the expo’s environmental impact by maximizing recycling, minimizing waste, and making sure that any products used at the expo can be recycled, reused, or composted. Since the expo is all about helping community members to live green, our Zero Waste goal is to ensure that ISLWE and its participants walk the walk, so to speak.

Many of our efforts are behind-the-scenes: our exhibitors apply digitally and we send e-mail confirmation to them in order to reduce unnecessary use of paper. We also ask that exhibitors and presenters bring no materials for distribution or packaging that are not 100% recyclable or 100% compostable. But the EAC is also taking steps that will be visible at ISLWE itself. The EAC is excited to partner with Midwest Fiber, who will be accepting all food waste from the expo for composting. There will even be separate, clearly marked containers for recyclables and compost to make it easy for the guests at the expo. Also, since traditional paper napkins cannot be recycled ISLWE will up the class factor and offer cloth napkins to be used instead.

Guests at ISLWE are able to do their part to help too. Our program guide will be available as an electronic version, and guests can choose to scan a QR code when they walk in the door rather than take a paper copy (which will be printed on 100% post-consumer recycled paper). Bringing reusable personal water bottles rather than disposable plastic ones will reduce waste from bottles that are not 100% recyclable. Additionally, the EAC encourages guests to carpool, and those biking to the event will enjoy secure valet-style bicycle parking.

The idea of making ISLWE a Zero Waste event is all about anticipating areas where the expo may produce unnecessary waste and finding ways that we can reduce or eliminate it. A Zero Waste sensibility can be used at public events, private parties and get-togethers, and even on a daily basis at home. Reducing your environmental impact can be easy once you take the time to think about those elephants you might have been throwing away.

EAC Member Benefit: Priority Registration for Eco-Action Camp Plus Discounted Fees!!

We are busy planning our Eco-Action Camps for kids who want to make our environment a better place! This program is for students in 6th-10th grade who don’t mind a little heat and doing some good work to benefit our local environment. Two weeks of camp will be offered this year: June 25-29 and July 18-22.

Co-sponsored by the Ecology Action Center and Normal Parks & Rec, this camp will explore some of McLean County’s environmental challenges. We’ll monitor the health of local streams by collecting tiny creatures living there, improve water quality in our creeks by educating citizens about storm water run-off issues, plant trees, learn about native plants, and more. We’ll visit Sugar Grove Nature Center, Comlara Park, and a maybe even a local swimming pool.

Adventurous students registering for this camp should be prepared to be hot, get wet, work hard, and have a fabulous time actively

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ECO-ACTION CAMP continued from page 4

helping the world around us become a better place!

Registration for this program is through the Town of Normal Parks and Recreation Department. Open enrollment for Normal residents begins on May 7, but EAC members can take advantage of Early Bird and discounted registration beginning March 15! For more information, please contact EAC Assistant Director

Expo FREE-4-ALL

Don't throw it away! Give it away!

In the tradition of Ecology Action Center's semi-annual FREE-4-ALL, we will be creating an opportunity to give away your unwanted stuff and to take what you like—FOR FREE!

Last year's FREE-4-ALL was a big success, so let's do it again! Here's what you need to know to participate.

Please Bring:

Household items

-Knick-knacks, lamps, vases, paintings, prints etc. Items must be clean and in good condition.

-No large furniture

Men & Women's Clothing

-Adult men & women's clothing only.

-Clothes must be clean and in good shape.

And for the Kids! FREE-4-ALL Toy Giveaway!

-Toys must be in good shape (all parts and pieces etc.) and clean.

Please bring household items, adult clothing and/ or toys that deserve a second life to the IWU Wellness Office by April 6th. Please contact us with questions or if you need help with pick-up, x3334

or wellness@iwu.edu

Donated items will be available at the Illinois Sustainable Living & Wellness Expo

Saturday, April 14th, 9 am-4 pm, at Shirk Center
For more info about the Expo go to: www.islwe.org

Native Plant Sale

Illinois Prairie Wild Ones will be sponsoring a native plant sale Saturday, May 26, 2012 at the U of I Extension Building on Hershey Ave in Bloomington. The sale will run from 9am—2pm in the parking lot. It will be moved indoors to the auditorium if the weather doesn't cooperate. A list of plants will be available on the website (www.wildones.org/chapters/ilprairie/) closer to the time of the sale. Experienced native plant gardeners will be available to help you with your purchases. Hope to see you there. For more information email: ciwildones.pres@gmail.com.





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Upcoming Events — SAVE THE DATE

March 22, 6:30 pm-8:30 pm Norwex Fundraiser for HHW Event

March 31, 8:30 pm-9:30 pm Earth Hour

April 3, 5:30 pm Green Drinks at Medici in Normal

April 14, 9 am-4 pm Illinois Sustainable Living and Wellness Expo, IWU Shirk Center. More details at www.islwe.org

April 21, 8 am Constitution Trail Clean Up Day, in Honor of Norm Miller

April 22 Earth Day

April 26 and 28 Rain Barrel Workshops, register at www.bn-green.org

April 28, 1 pm Rain Barrel Retrofitting Workshop, register at www.bn-green.org

September Household Hazardous Waste Collection Event. Make a donation to support this critical service at www.ecologyactioncenter.org



Find, friend, fan, follow, and have fun with us via social media. Find direct links at www.ecologyactioncenter.org