



The Ecology Action Center News

Spring 2010

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Ecology Action Center

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9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Monday—Friday

Recycling Made Easy **- Christina Pallack, EAC Intern**



We all know that recycling is good for the planet, but few of us find time to do it. Here are some easy methods to implement a recycling system in your home. They can be easily assimilated into any household, take very little time, and are convenient for even busy schedules. An easy method to eliminate sorting is to put separate trash cans under the kitchen sink. You don't have to go out and buy more trash cans, you can use any receptacle you have, such

as a box, bucket, old laundry basket etc. If you have a curb-side recycling service which does not require you to sort your recyclables then you only need one receptacle which you can take to the curb on collection day. An easy way to help others in your household put their recyclables into the proper bin is to make a list of the common items you purchase which are recyclable. Then attach each list to the proper receptacle. For instance, if your household drinks soda, include soda cans on your list and attach it to the aluminum receptacle. Same goes for plastics and mixed paper. Unsure where certain items fit, or even if they're recyclable? Check online for numerous lists of items that are recyclable. Bloomington Public Works and Normal Public Works are a great place to start for lists as well as locating recycling centers where you can drop off your recyclables.

For Bloomington Public Works visit: <http://www.cityblm.org/>

For Normal Public Works visit: <http://www.normal.org/gov/publicworks/index.asp>

If you don't have a curb-side recycling service, you can still create an easy way to recycle. Start with the previously mentioned sorting method. As previously stated, Bloomington and Normal have numerous establishments with recycling drop off centers. A convenient place is Wal-Mart. On your next shopping trip grab your recycling and drop it off. There are also many schools which have drop off stations. The next time you pick up or drop off your kids, bring your recycling along too. The convenience of these drop off stations is that they are a 24/7 service. There's no need to schedule a certain time to drop off your recycling, you can drop it off whenever you have time.

Speaking of supermarkets, another great way to help out the planet is to use reusable tote bags instead of the typical plastic bags, which are not recyclable. While many people do have these bags I know that many people forget them when they leave for the store. An easy way to make sure you never forget your tote bags is to leave them in your car. Whenever you get back from shopping, unload, and put the bags right back into your car; you'll never have to worry about forgetting them again.

Still think your recycling won't make a difference? Consider this, recycling not only cuts down on what goes into our landfills, but it also lowers energy and pollution output. If every American recycled his or her newspaper just one day a week, we would save about 36 million trees a year. For every four-foot stack of paper you recycle, you save a tree. Even the smallest amount of recycling makes a big difference—thanks for doing your part!



Summer at the EAC

Meet the EAC'S New Assistant Director!

EAC Staff

Michael Brown
Executive Director

Kris Hall
Assistant Director

Michele Bell
Environmental Educator

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Carl Teichman
Laurine Brown
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Shari Bowman
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Greetings, EAC Supporters!

Please allow me to introduce myself as the newest member of the EAC staff... I am Kris Hall, and I was recently appointed to the position of Assistant Director! In this role, I will be coordinating the many educational activities that are facilitated by the EAC, as well as working with the membership program (that's YOU!) and helping with administrative duties.

Many of you might remember me from my long tenure as the Education Coordinator at the Miller Park Zoo. In that role, I developed countless programs, recruited and trained volunteers, wrote newsletters, organized special events, and had the incredible privilege of sharing the wonderful world of animals with thousands of children and families.

The shift from animals to the environment really makes a lot of sense. I have been passionate about "saving the planet" for a long time. After all, those animals can't thrive in a world with eroding habitats and resources. So I hope to be a source of information for kids, families, teachers, home owners, and dogs (OK, maybe not dogs, but whoever wants to listen!) as we move forward with our mission.

So what is that mission? Have you heard it? Have you shared it with friends? Here it is: "The Ecology Action Center has a mission to inspire and assist the residents of McLean County in creating, strengthening, and preserving a healthy environment."

Our role is to provide information about making eco-friendly choices. A lot of that can be done with a website, and ours is pretty good! But as I learned while sitting on the floor teaching thousands of children and parents about animals over the years, to truly INSPIRE someone usually requires a hands-on buy-in. I would like to launch a new series of programs here at the EAC: Family Eco Adventures. These will take a variety of forms: field trips, hikes, classes at the EAC, and more. We will work with partners like the Town of Normal, Sugar Grove Nature Center, the University of Illinois Extension office, the Children's Discovery Museum and others. We will learn about garbage, energy, water, habitats, landfills, birds and butterflies! We let the enthusiasm of our children lead us, and we will very likely get messy in the process. Sound like fun?? I hope so! If your family is ready for your first Eco Adventure, please sign up for "Garbage 101" on page 3. As EAC members, you get the first opportunity to register for these limited-space Family Eco Adventures, AND a discount!

My goal is to spread our message to more people by involving more people. What do you want to learn about? How can we help? I hope to offer more programs for you, our members; programs for kids, families, and adults. This will translate into more reasons for people to join the EAC and officially support us and our mission. Your ideas, participation and help in spreading the word will be critical. Thanks in advance for all your help!!

All this environmental stuff can be daunting and seem like a doomsday story some days. But it doesn't have to be. Everyone can take little steps. And the most inspiring steps are sometimes taken by the littlest feet in your house.

I look forward to getting to know you, and helping you in your quest to live a greener life! Please contact me with class suggestions, questions, or just to say hi! You can reach me at khall@ecologyactioncenter.org or 454-3169. Thanks!

You Are Invited to the EAC's First
Family Eco Adventure!

Garbage 101

An adventure for families with children ages 5 and up

Have you ever wondered what happens to your garbage after it gets picked up by the garbage truck? Do you love trucks with fancy levers, buttons and even cameras? Would you like to meet one of these trucks up close and personal?? Here's your chance to do all that and MORE as we venture to the Public Works Facility and meet Tom Ramirez, the man in charge of all the garbage trucks AND the recycle bins! He'll give us a tour of all the fancy equipment, and help us explore the amazing world of garbage and recycling.

When: Tuesday, July 20, 6:00-7:00 pm

Where: Normal Public Works Facility, 1301 Warriner Street, Normal

Instructor: Kris Hall, EAC Assistant Director

Participants: Families with children ages 5 and up. Due to safety considerations, younger siblings may NOT attend.

Cost: \$4 per person for EAC members; \$6 per person for non-members. The cost is the same for children and adults, and ALL participants will receive an EAC canvas shopping bag (a \$5 value!)

Registration: Due to the up close and personal nature of this experience, the group size is limited. Please register as soon as possible using the form below.

Note: This is the first of what we hope will be a series of member-oriented programs. As such, we will try to give members the first shot at registration for each of these opportunities, as well as a discount on the registration price! If you have friends who would like to become EAC members so that they can join in on the fun, please refer them to our website for membership information!

Questions? Contact Kris Hall at khall@ecologyactioncenter.org or 454-3169. Thanks!

Garbage 101 Registration Form

Parent Name _____ Address _____ City _____

Zip _____ Phone _____ Email Address _____

Please list all participants below:

Are you currently members of the EAC? _____

Name	Circle adult or indicate child age		Fees:
1. _____	Adult Child age _____		# _____ x \$4 (member) = _____
2. _____	Adult Child age _____		# _____ x \$6 (nonmember) = _____
3. _____	Adult Child age _____		Total enclosed: _____
4. _____	Adult Child age _____		
5. _____	Adult Child age _____		

Please make checks payable to Ecology Action Center and mail to: Kris Hall, EAC, 202 W College Ave., Normal, IL 61761.

PLEASE READ AND SIGN THE WAIVER

Please read this form carefully and be aware in registering yourself for participation in this program you will be waiving and releasing all claims for injuries you might sustain arising out of this program. As a participant in the program I recognize and acknowledge that there are certain risks of physical injury and I agree to assume the full risk of any injuries, including death, damages or loss which I may sustain as a result of participating in any and all activities connected with or associated with such program. I agree to waive and relinquish all claims I may have as a result of participating in the program against the Ecology Action Center and its officers, agents, servants and employees. I do hereby fully release and discharge the Ecology Action Center and its officers, agents, servants and employees from any and all claims from injuries, including death, damage or loss which I may have or which may accrue to me on account of my participation in the program. I further agree to indemnify and hold harmless and defend the Ecology Action Center and its officers, agents, servants and employees from any and all claims resulting from injuries, including death, damages and losses sustained by me and arising out of, connected with, or in any way associated with the activities of the program. In case of accident or sickness, I consent to emergency medical care provided by ambulance or hospital personnel. I hereby consent to the use of my photograph in Ecology Action Center brochures, publications, slide presentations, etc. I have read and fully understand the above Waiver and Release of All Claims.

Signature

Date



Eco Friendly Lawn Care

Green Lawns, Not Lakes -Christina Pallack, EAC Intern

Green is the color of summer, and we all want that perfect, impeccable lawn, right? Many of us will fertilize to get that perfect summer lawn, but did you know that your fertilizer could be polluting our water systems? All fertilizers carry a combination of three elements: nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium. It is the phosphorus which is carried by rain fall into the storm drains which then puts it into our lakes and streams, the very places where we get our water from. Minnesota, Michigan, and Florida have already cited a statewide ban on fertilizers containing phosphorus.



The only time your lawn really needs phosphorus is when a lawn is newly seeded. The phosphorus helps to create healthy root growth and development. In general, however, many scientists have found that lawns already have enough phosphorus content on their own to support a healthy lawn. To be sure that your lawn can survive without the added phosphorus get your soil tested. The University of Illinois Extension facility in Bloomington does offer \$15.00 kits for soil testing where you can mail your soil sample to a lab. You can also visit Key Agricultural Services' website, www.keyaginc.com, where you can download forms and send your sample into their facility in Macomb, IL.

Phosphorus run off into lakes and streams can lead to an over abundance of blue-green algae production and other aquatic growth. This can lead to depleted oxygen levels in our lakes and streams. The lack of oxygen in the water can then lead to low levels of fish and other marine life in our waterways. The algae build up not only stinks, but it can also be harmful to other animals and children who swim in the lake.

To insure that your lawn care this season will be the least harmful to our water systems here are a few basic principles to go by. First, buy phosphorus free fertilizer. How can you tell? On your fertilizer bag there is a series of three hyphenated numbers. The number in the center should be '0' (i.e. 12-0-10). The first numeric value in this code illustrates the nitrogen content, while the last number highlights the potassium content. If you have a commercial lawn service fertilize your lawn, ask that they use a fertilizer with no phosphate.

Simple practices of when and how much you fertilize can also make a big difference. First and foremost you only need to fertilize twice for the summer season; during the spring months and during the fall. In between those times you can still get the nutrients of fertilizing without actually using chemical fertilizer. By cutting your grass and leaving the clippings on your lawn to decompose, you can add nitrogen to your lawn without using store bought fertilizer. Do not fertilize right before it rains. This eliminates all benefits of the fertilizer and it increases chemical run off into our waterways. When you finish fertilizing sweep any excess on your driveway or sidewalk back into the lawn. This excess fertilizer will only travel into the storm drain during the next rainfall and it won't do your water or your lawn any good.

You can purchase phosphate free fertilizer from local hardware stores. The Lowes and Farm and Fleet in Bloomington, and the Menards and Home Depot in Normal all carry brands of phosphorus free fertilizer. Just check the center number to make sure it reads '0' and you're ready for that coveted green summer.

For more information on soil testing contact:
University of Illinois
Extension
402 North Hershey
Road
Bloomington, IL
61704
(309) 663-8306

Or

Key Agricultural
Services
114 Shady Lane
Macomb, IL 61455
(309) 833-1313
www.keyaginc.com



New Rain Barrel Workshop Dates

The Ecology Action Center is excited to announce our hands-on workshop where YOU build your own water saving rainwater collection and storage container.

Saturday, August 7, 10:00 a.m. or 1:00 p.m.

Commercially available rainwater collection and storage systems range in price from \$75.00-\$165.00 but the Ecology Action Center is offering this workshop at a cost of \$28.00 for members of the Ecology Action Center and \$38.00 for non-members. These workshops will fill quickly, **but EAC members are being given the first opportunity to register!**

Please go to the link: www.ecologyactioncenter.org/flyers/8.7.10_10AM_rainbarrel_wksp.pdf or www.ecologyactioncenter.org/flyers/8.7.10_1PM_rainbarrel_wksp.pdf (depending on what time you would like to register for) for more details and to print out the registration form. Registration will open to non-members one week after this newsletter is mailed, so act now! If you have questions, please contact Kris Hall at khall@ecologyactioncenter.org or 454-3169.



Reducing Stormwater Runoff Pollution: Rain Garden Installed at Davis Lodge

EAC volunteers and staff recently put in two days of hard manual labor to excavate and install a rain garden at Davis Lodge on Lake Bloomington. A rain garden is a shallow depression designed to capture stormwater and allow it to slowly dissipate into the soil over a period of a few days while also filtering out pollutants like lawn care chemicals, silt, road salt, litter, and more. By planting a rain garden with attractive native wildflowers and grasses, not only does it increase the filtration abilities of the rain garden, but it makes it an attractive landscape feature.

Strategies such as rain gardens and rain barrels help reduce stormwater runoff. Combined with strategies such as Yard Smart, which seeks to reduce the amount of synthetic chemicals in use on our yards, we can significantly reduce the amount of pollutants entering our waterways, thereby making a safer environment healthier for wildlife, recreation, and for our own drinking water.

With Savanna Blazing Star, Northern Dropseed, Wild Garlic, Stiff Goldenrod, Hairyfruit Sedge and more, the Davis Lodge Rain Garden is populated with colorful array of native wildflowers and grasses that will also provide habitats and food for wildlife. Later this summer, the project will be completed with interpretive signage and rain barrels also installed on site. Please stop by and check out our progress. If you are interested in building your own rain garden, please let us know; we hope to schedule a future workshop to share our experiences and help others as we all work together to protect our clean water.

Many thanks to the volunteers who contributed to this project, including Sheryl Chambers, Katie Gandhi, Freddie Greghorn, and Lavelle Baskins.

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

To Email Visit

www.ecologyactioncenter.org/about/contact.shtml

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Calendar of Upcoming Events

May 15– October 30, Saturdays 7:30 a.m.– 12:00 p.m.: Bloomington Farmers' Market located on the courthouse square in Bloomington (Main & Jefferson) offers local produce, meat, eggs, cut flowers, plants, organic products, and live music.

June 5– September 5, Tuesdays 3:30– 6:00 p.m.: Normal Farmers' Market located at 100 Block East Beaufort also offers local foods and organic products.

July 6, 5:30- 7:30 p.m.: Green Drinks Discussion Group at Medici in Downtown Normal.

July 10 & 11: Sugar Creek Art Festival takes place in Uptown Normal, East Beaufort & Linden to the Circle– North Street & Circle to Fell Street. Features 140 Arts and Crafts Booths. July 10 8 a.m.– 5 p.m. & July 11 11 a.m.– 4 p.m.

July 20, 6:00– 7:00 p.m.: Garbage 101. For more information and to sign up see page 3. If you have any questions call (309) 454-3169.

August 7, 10 a.m. & 1 p.m.: Rain Barrel Workshops. For more information and to sign up see page 5.

The Ecology Action Center's 2009 Annual Report is now available on our website. Download it from 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.