Engage, Conserve, Optimize Algonquin

By Katie Parkhurst, Village of Algonquin

The Village of Algonquin continually strives to increase its environmental efforts and outreach. As such, the Village is currently writing an Environmental Action Plan. The Plan is spearheaded by a committee (ECO-Algonquin) comprised of staff members representing every department. The plan will be available on the Village Web site (www.algonquin.org) after approval by the Village Board this fall. The Village has been a leader in environmental initiatives since the 1990s and our efforts continue to grow. Initiatives are numerous and range from bicycle patrols by the police department, Tree City USA, a water conservation program, and vegetable oil fuel, to adopting a natural areas protection ordinance, and much more. The goals of the Committee are to:

  Engage– To become a sustainable community, a collaborative effort is imperative. ECO-Algonquin strives to engage individuals and organizations in the community to become actively involved in initiatives that work toward a sustainable Algonquin.

  Conserve– Our resources are a finite source on which we depend. To achieve sustainability, we must conserve and protect the Village’s ecological and natural resources.

  Optimize– The reason why Algonquin is a leader in sustainable practices today is that our citizens, elected officials, and staff understand that environmentally responsible practices can be more effective and efficient than the status quo. The Village must continue to optimize its operations by utilizing resources efficiently and effectively.

Algonquin is a proud member of several organizations working to promote and protect

Continued page 3

It’s Our River Day attracted over 100 to Cornish Park in Algonquin on September 19. Pictured here is Jeff Jolitz, Algonquin Historic Commission Chairperson, speaking about the significance and history of the Fox River. See article page 8 for full story. Photo: Katie Parkhurst

The Defenders announce search for Outreach Coordinator. See page 4 for announcement.
The Environmental Defenders of McHenry County is a citizen organization dedicated to the preservation and improvement of the environment. We are committed to building sound ecological relationships between people and the natural world that supports all life.

To achieve the aim of environmental preservation and improvement, we provide the community with educational programs and volunteer action on pollution prevention, sustainable land use and energy and natural resource conservation.

We advocate policies that protect drinking water supplies and conserve land for open space and agriculture. We demonstrate waste reduction through recycling drives and reuse centers. We encourage natural resource protection through native landscaping and stream protection programs.

Members of The Environmental Defenders of McHenry County receive the newsletter as a membership benefit. Basic memberships start at $50. For information, questions, comments on membership or address changes, please contact our office at (815) 338-0393 or e-mail us at mcdef@owc.net.

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Rates:
- Full Page $300
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- Eighth Page 75

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Opinions expressed in NATURE Matters do not necessarily reflect the position and/or policy of the Environmental Defenders of McHenry County. However, NATURE Matters will not directly advocate positions in opposition to those of The Defenders. We reserve the right to condense or revise articles and illustrations for space, clarity or libel. Knowledgeable local environmentalists may be consulted to check facts. Letters to the Editor can be sent to ckanner@mcddefenders.net. Letters will be published based on space and Board review. Opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect the position and/or policy of The Defenders. Letters can also be mailed to 124 Cass Street, Suite 3, Woodstock, IL 60098.

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the environment in our region. Algonquin is working towards fulfilling the mission of the Cool Cities program aimed at reducing global warming emissions and the Clean Air Counts goal of reducing smog-causing emissions. Currently, a carbon emissions inventory is being conducted to determine our emissions level and identify areas to improve. The Village has adopted an anti-idling policy for Village vehicles, purchased hybrid vehicles when appropriate, and created an alternate fuel program. Our fleet maintenance division collects used vegetable oil from restaurants, processes it, and uses this to operate equipment and vehicles. Conversion of older grass-detention basins into wetland-enhanced detention basins is underway. This conversion, being done by the Village, is an effort to filter and clean stormwater, encourage infiltration, and restore native plants to the area to restore wildlife habitats. Algonquin has also partnered with organizations to host events (It’s Our River Day) or promote sales (rain barrels) to increase education and awareness.

Education and involving the community are key to successful programs. Algonquin believes in leading by example. Internal operations have been implemented to require all staff members to be more environmentally conscious in their daily work tasks. Most of these items are simple to implement and can be replicated in all businesses and households. Some of the items include: purchase recycled paper, print double-sided, send documents via email to eliminate the need for paper, turn off lights and computers not in use, and purchase environmentally safe cleaning supplies. Through the Village’s contract with Waste Management, a quarterly newsletter is sent to all households with educational information regarding recycling, volumes collected and other pertinent environmental information regarding the Village.

In addition to educational information being distributed, the community is encouraged to become actively involved. Public events such as the water conservation program and conservation community day are annual events that continually stress environmental awareness to the entire community. Residents can become a steward of a protected natural area after completing training through the Public Works department. New this year, the Village distributed free CFL light bulbs to residents in an effort to lessen our energy demand. These CFL light bulbs were provided to Algonquin at no charge by the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus through a grant from the Northern Illinois Energy Project and the Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance. On August 1, the Village hosted our first e-Waste Recycling event for all residents. Over 400 cars stopped by to drop off electronic goods for recycling. Computer Recycling Center diverted four truckloads of electronic goods from the landfill. The event was so successful the items were stockpiled while waiting for the truck to return from the first load.

The Village of Algonquin is committed to preserving and protecting our natural resources. We encourage everyone to join our efforts to make a difference. Please visit the Village website, www.algonquin.org, periodically for more information about our efforts.
Governor Pat Quinn named John D. Rogner assistant director of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR). John joins the IDNR from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), where he served as supervisor of the Chicago Field Office since 1998. “John Rogner is one of the most respected natural resource conservation professionals in the country and we are very happy to bring his knowledge, expertise, and wealth of ideas to state government,” Governor Quinn said.

As IDNR Assistant Director, John will serve as a liaison to the Department’s federal partners and work to rebuild its fish and wildlife programs, as well as help manage new initiatives on youth retention and recruitment. He is joining IDNR as part of an agreement with the USFWS intended to strengthen fish and wildlife programs and projects managed cooperatively by both agencies.

“I am thrilled to have John Rogner join us as we work to rebuild the Department of Natural Resources, restore public faith in the agency, and implement new ways to get more young people involved in outdoor recreation and conservation stewardship,” said IDNR Director Marc Miller.

John has more than 25 years of experience in federal wildlife, endangered species, and wetlands programs. As USFWS field office supervisor, he developed successful habitat restoration programs and relationships with public and private organizations dedicated to wildlife enhancement in northeast Illinois. For the past 10 years, he has chaired the Chicago Regional Biodiversity Council (Chicago Wilderness), a coalition of nearly 250 environmental, scientific, and cultural organizations.

John received both a Bachelor (1977) and Master of Science (1981) degree in Biological Sciences from Northern Illinois University in DeKalb.

Governor Quinn also announced that Illinois citizens interested in conservation issues are invited to participate in the new Illinois Conservation Congress. “The mission of the new Conservation Congress will be to propose and advocate actions to protect and conserve the natural resources of Illinois, and ensure through professional management the sustainable use, recreational opportunities, and enjoyment of those resources,” said Director Miller.

The new Illinois Conservation Congress will focus on youth recruitment and retention, public access, and funding issues. Committees of the Natural Resources Advisory Board will meet with interested citizens and constituent groups this summer and fall, with the new Conservation Congress convening at the IDNR headquarters in Springfield on Oct. 24-25. More information on public involvement opportunities through the new Conservation Congress is available on the IDNR website at www.dnr.state.il.us.

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John D. Rogner Named Assistant Director of Illinois Department of Natural Resources

By Barb Day

The Environmental Defenders of McHenry County is seeking to hire an Outreach Coordinator. This position will provide ample opportunities for the right individual to significantly affect the quality of life in McHenry County, IL. Responsibilities will include representing the Defenders at public meetings, fundraising, and membership expansion. This is a full-time, salaried position. Benefits and salary are negotiable. This is a high visibility job for an individual who seeks a leadership position in the community, is creative, and recognizes the significance of environmental advocacy.

The Defenders is a small non-profit organization focused on advocating for the preservation and improvement of environmental quality. Formed in 1970, the Defenders has championed recycling, protected ground and surface water resources, and promoted responsible land use.

Submit your resume by November 11, 2009 to the Environmental Defenders of McHenry County at 124 Cass Street, Suite 3, Woodstock, IL, 60098 or to mcdef@owc.net.

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The Environmental Defenders of McHenry County Outreach Coordinator

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Woodstock High School Places 9th at National Envirothon Competition!

By Spring Duffey

On August 2-8, the Envirothon team of Chelsey Belt, Brian Clow, Jon Peschke, Kim Lucke and Anna Woodruff, along with their adviser Bill Donato, travelled to Asheville, North Carolina, to compete at the Canon National Envirothon. The dedicated team placed 9th in the Nation and received $1,100 scholarships for each team member for their outstanding efforts.

The National Envirothon is the largest high school environmental education competition featuring teams from across the United States and Canada. The Envirothon program combines classroom learning with hands-on field experiences focused on aquatics, forestry, soils, wildlife and a current environmental issue. This year’s current environmental issue was “Biodiversity in a Changing World.” Woodstock earned a berth to the State competition by outscoring 35 teams at the Northeastern Illinois Envirothon, held at Prairieview Education Center, Crystal Lake. At State, Woodstock outscored 15 teams to earn the right to represent Illinois at the national competition.

The Northeastern Illinois Envirothon is hosted by Council 16, a conglomeration of Soil & Water Conservation Districts from the Counties of Boone, Cook, DeKalb, DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry, Will, and Winnebago. Staff works tirelessly throughout the year to prepare study materials, create tests, provide training workshops, secure funding, coordinate presenters, and many other duties. Congratulations Woodstock High School Envirothon Team on all of your accomplishments.
Book Sale & Resale Shop
Open for Business

Coming soon, the Defenders will be selling used books and better quality resale items at the store shown below. Donations of used books & better “stuff” (think antiques, collectibles, and new) will be taken when the shop is open or by arrangement with the office. Use of the space is generously donated by the owners of the Woodstock Cinema. We hope to have use of the space at least through December, so come get some holiday shopping done, the reuse way! The address is 225 N. Main Street on the Woodstock Square near the movie theater.

Member Spotlight

Bill Howenstine was teaching environmental science at Northeastern University when in 1970 or so he and Alice moved out to McHenry County. Naturally, they were interested to know if any environmental groups existed in the area. Newspaper articles appeared mentioning the Defenders and the organization’s support for the referendum to form a Conservation District. Bill and Alice sought out the President Brian Koukol and joined in early 1971. They have been active Defenders’ members ever since. And, Bill became one of the first trustees of the Conservation District. The Defenders are sure glad that Bill and Alice continue to be members and continue caring about our county.

Kilowatt Ours

The Education Committee has launched a new public program, Kilowatt Ours. This documentary, produced in 2007 by filmmaker Jeff Barrie, looks for solutions to today’s energy problems in America’s towns and cities. What would you find if you traced the wires from your light switch to their energy source? Kilowatt Ours begins with that question and moves to:

- the problems with today’s energy production
- the ways ordinary people meet their energy needs through conservation and renewables
- how to reduce energy bills while improving the environment.

As a re-invented Full Moon Theater, the Education Committee hopes to interest local groups in scheduling this program. A volunteer from the committee will introduce the DVD, show the 35-minute version of the documentary, and lead a follow-up discussion and energy activities as time permits. Participants will also be provided with handouts of additional energy information that they can put to use immediately. No fee is charged for the program, but Defenders always welcomes donations. To schedule a program on this timely topic, requests may be directed to the Education Committee of the Defenders through the office at (815) 338-0393 or email mcd@owc.net.
International Day of Climate Action
Bike 350 McHenry County
Sign Up Now!

“Bike 350 McHenry County” will take to the bike trails and roads of McHenry County on Saturday, October 24, 2009. The Education Committee of McHenry County Defenders is sponsoring our local event, just one of 1,378 events planned for October 24 in 99 countries. To register, go to the Defenders’ Web site at www.mcdef.org and select Community Events, where you’ll find “Bike 350 McHenry County” listed.

“350” is the number NASA Climatologist, Dr. James Hansen and a team of scientists, have set as the maximum number of carbon parts per million in the atmosphere. Since we are beyond 385 now, there is work to be done. The world’s leaders will meet in Copenhagen this December to craft a new global treaty on cutting carbon emissions, so people all over the world—from Antarctica to Zimbabwe—are showing their support for “350.” The current draft version of the United Nations treaty now includes 350 parts per million as its target. That is also the minimum number of miles we hope to pedal, cumulatively, in McHenry County. Through publicity we can make others aware of the need to decrease our collective carbon emissions. The 350 website posts photos from each event worldwide. Together we make a strong statement to our leaders. Here’s how to take part. “Bike 350” is a low-key, low-carbon event. Riders register online from now until October 17. They select a segment (or segments) from a road/bike trail map of the county that shapes that important number “350” in about 135 miles of routes. For the smallest carbon footprint, the portion selected should be close to home and suit the ages and abilities of the riders. The “350” map incorporates both county bike trails and roads. And by getting on our bikes at our homes, we won’t need to get into our cars.

To proclaim our purpose and identify ourselves, we would like each rider to affix the number 350 to the back of his or her shirt. It can be pinned on, or made with markers, cut-out numerals, or fabric art on the back of an old t-shirt. This way no one need purchase something new that takes energy to produce and transport.

Families are invited to participate, as well as all manner of bike riders. Groups are encouraged to ride together, particularly if possible without accumulating car miles.

On October 24, you choose what time of day to ride. Take your water bottle and wear your “350” shirt. Bike safely, with helmets for all riders and special caution on roads, and have a great time while making a statement about the environment to our leaders. Please e-mail notice of your completed segment(s) back to the Defenders’ website on the form provided as soon as possible after the ride. That way we can determine our grand total. Rain dates are Friday, October 23 and Sunday, October 25, and again you set your own time.

Be sure to go to www.350.org to learn more about what others are doing. You’ll want to see the 2-minute video of what’s happening worldwide for “350” on October 24. To find our McHenry County event at www.350.org, select Find an Action below the world map. Enter Woodstock and United States. Additional keywords to search are McHenry County and bike ride. Be sure to sign up to participate in “Bike 350” at the Defenders website. We look forward to your participation in this important event.

“Make a Difference Day”~ October 24!
Habitat Restoration at the Headwaters of the Kishwaukee

On October 24, members of the Water Resources Protection Committee and the Natural Resources Committee of the Defenders will meet at the headwaters of the Kishwaukee River to remove invasive species and collect trash. Work will be conducted on Defenders’ property as well as on property owned by the McHenry County Soil and Water District. The goal is to improve this area as habitat for native plants and animals. Defenders’ members are invited to “make a difference” on this date by joining in this effort. The event will begin at 9:00 a.m. and conclude at noon after a short hike through the prairie. Volunteers are asked to wear work clothes and gloves and to park in the Soil and Water District’s parking lot at the corner of Hwy. 14 and Dean Street in Woodstock. All necessary equipment as well as water and snacks will be provided. Come help us make a positive difference in the environment and enjoy some time outdoors at our beautiful property on Dean Street!
It’s Our River Day

By Cynthia Kanner

On a beautiful September day, a group of over 140 joined together at Cornish Park in Algonquin for the 2nd annual “It’s Our River Day,” co-sponsored by the Defenders and the Village of Algonquin. The day is a state-wide program that emphasizes the importance of Illinois rivers. On behalf of the Village, Trustee Bob Smith welcomed everyone to Cornish park. Speakers included Gary Swick from Friends of the Fox River (FOFR), Cindy Skrukrud from the Sierra Club and the Defenders, and Defenders’ president Bill Donato. The main speaker was Jeff Jolitz, pictured on the cover, who discussed the history of the Fox River, including the history of the river as it relates to the environment.

Mr. Jolitz historical talk began with detailed descriptions of various aspects of the river, such as its physical condition, conservation of natural resources as it relates to the river, transportation, water surveys, fishing, and population growth. Toward the end of an informative presentation, Mr. Jolitz surprised the audience when he noted that, what seemed like very current information and concerns, was actually taken from text written by the State of Illinois Rivers and Lakes Commission in the year 1914! He also noted that one of the most picturesque portions of the 140 mile river, was actually thought to be a section beginning at and below the location of our event that day.

The Sierra Club once again provided bags and gloves for the clean-up and snacks and water to help folks make it through the day, while FOFR educated volunteers about the group’s stream monitoring program. Representatives from two paddle groups, the Prairie Coast Paddlers and the St. Charles Canoe Club, spoke about their respective boats and clubs and demonstrated some paddling techniques, despite the shallowness of the river.

Those who attended and volunteered their time for the three-hour celebration included individuals from Algonquin and surrounding towns, groups from Woodstock and Prairie Grove high schools, as well as Cub Scout Pack 151 and some children and their families from Algonquin’s Eastview Elementary School Earth Club. Also helping out was the manager and crew from the new Cardinal Fitness, located in east Algonquin, who joined the day as a clean-up team. Their mascot, a giant cardinal, was a unique site for the kids, who had a great time picking up trash, climbing on the outdoor equipment and skipping stones.

This year, the Mack Hotterson band once again generously donated their time and great music to It’s Our River Day. Some of the pieces were picked just for the occasion, including the tune by the Talking Heads, “Take Me to the River.”

Thank you to everyone who came out for the event. With the mix of people, school and businesses, it was truly a community event. A very special thanks on behalf of the Defenders goes to Katie Parkhurst of the Village of Algonquin for coordinating many of the logistics. Thanks to all of you, well over 500 lbs. of trash and over 30 lbs. of recyclables was picked up, including the unusual items shown at top! Thank you and please mark your calendars for next year’s, “It’s Our River Day!”

It’s Our River Day 2010 is scheduled for Saturday, September 18.
25 years of Roasting!

We realized, as about 60 of us were all enjoying being together on August 16 – eating corn, kids playing, listening to music, families trying their luck on the walking boards, feeding chickens, enjoying the hay rides, and just talking – that this was at least the 25th year that we have been gathering at Pioneer Tree Farm for the Defenders Annual Pot Luck and Corn Roast! Lots of good memories!

Some of the early Defenders, who were also some of Bill Howenstine’s students at Northeastern Illinois University, surprised him with a special tribute and two native trees that he did not yet have. One was an alternate-leaved dogwood and the other a musclewood, or blue beech. They both were planted a few days later and are doing well. We’re happy to have “planted” this tradition of Corn Roasts and we look forward to seeing everyone throughout the year at other Defenders’ events and meetings.

Thanks to those who could attend! ☺

The Howenstines
Defenders’ Recycling Drives

What:
Collection of fluorescent tubes, compact fluorescent bulbs, and household batteries for recycling. The suggested donation for this service is .50 cents per pound of household batteries and .50 cents each for fluorescents. We will also be conducting a buy-back program for aluminum cans and other non-ferrous metals and will be accepting styrofoam pellets and bubble wrap. Come in and help keep these items out of the landfill.

When:
Second Saturday of every Month.

Where:
Woodstock: The Woodstock collection takes place on the second Saturday of each EVEN numbered month and is held in front of the Farm Bureau, 1102 McConnell Road in Woodstock, from 9:00 a.m. to noon.

McHenry: The McHenry collection takes place on the second Saturday of ODD numbered months at the Metra Station Parking lot, 4005 Main Street in McHenry, from 9:00 a.m. to noon. The McHenry collection will also pay for aluminum, brass and copper.

Defenders’ Three-Day Book Sale Blitz

By Cynthia Kanner

Thanks to over 20 volunteers, including Defenders’ members, committee members, board members, and staff, an enormous amount of books for the annual Defenders’ book sale was unboxed, organized, sold, re-boxed and moved, all within seven days. Over $1,700 worth of books and videos were sold during the weekend of September 25-27 and remaining items are now available at the Defenders’ temporary resale shop on the Woodstock Square.

The book sale brought back together the “book ladies,” (see NATURE Matters, Spring 2007, Volume 1, Issue 2) who worked so hard in previous years at the Defenders’ annual book sale.

A very big thank you is extended to the Algonquin Township Road District, the site where paint collection has taken place (see related article page 11), and its Highway Commissioner, Bob Miller. Thank you for your help, your tables and your hospitality! A special thanks also goes to John Headley’s Key Club members from Woodstock High School. There were about 25 students and they moved all the boxes of books from the truck into the back of the building in Woodstock in 23 minutes!

If you yourself were able to stop by and pick up a book or two, happy reading!

From L to R, Alice Lumsden, Nancy Schietzelt and Fran Hicks.
What Happens to Paint Now?!

By Barb Day

Bob Miller, Algonquin Township Road District Highway Commissioner, received notice from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) that the IEPA will no longer be able to provide funding for the Partners for Waste Paint Solutions Program. This is sad news for our environment. Algonquin Township and all other groups that have collected paint remnants and forwarded them to IEPA will no longer be collecting paint. This has been a very successful program for quite a long time. Please contact your State of Illinois Senator and Representatives and ask them to intervene, so this worthwhile program can continue.

In case there is any doubt, the answer to the above question is: paint will end up in rivers, groundwater and landfills; instead of being mixed together and made available to people at a very reasonable price for reuse.

A special thanks goes to the Mack Hotterson Band for donating their time and music to It’s Our River Day on September 19. And, to Cardinal Fitness of Algonquin for organizing a group from their business to work at the clean-up. Thank you!

Entertainment Coupon Books

Now available at the office! Entertainment coupon books are in. The cost is $20. This is a no-hassle fundraiser for the Defenders. The more books we sell the higher percentage we keep! Buy one for yourself, and see if your friends and neighbors would like to buy one. Coupons for Duke’s Alehouse, 1776, Dominick’s and lots more! Stop by the office to have a look.

The Mack Hotterson Band.
For bookings go to www.mackhotterson.com.

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**Expires 10/31/2009. Until one (1) per person. Must show valid I.D. Valid on first visit only. $10 value. Not redeemable for cash. Must be a local resident.
## Calendar of EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

### OCTOBER
- **Wednesday, October 7**
  - **“Green Wednesdays”** at Dukes Alehouse, Crystal Lake.
- **Saturday, October 24**
  - **“350” Bike Rally.** See Details page 7.
- **Saturday, October 24**
  - **Make A Difference Day.** 9:00 a.m. to noon at Kishwaukee Headwaters (site of Defenders’ property and Soil and Water District property. See Details page 7.

### NOVEMBER
- **Wednesday, November 4**
  - **“Green Wednesdays”** at Dukes Alehouse, Crystal Lake.
- **Saturday, November 7**

### DECEMBER
- **Wednesday, December 2**
  - **“Green Wednesdays”** at Dukes Alehouse, Crystal Lake.

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First Wednesday of every month!

**“Green Wednesdays”** at Dukes Alehouse & Kitchen, 110 N. Main Street, Crystal Lake
From 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.

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**Environmental Defenders of McHenry County**

**Preserve * Protect * Educate**

**Citizens working for a healthy environment**

124 Cass Street, Suite 3

Woodstock, IL  60098

www.mcdef.org

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