A Historical Review

*Forward by Cynthia W. Kanner*

*Article by the late Margaret Marchi*

We hope you enjoyed Part I of Margaret Marchi’s piece on The Defenders. As promised, Part II appears in this issue – food for thought as we carry on the work of helping to defend the environment in our county.

**PART II**

**MCHENRY COUNTY DEFENDERS; THE FIRST 29 YEARS**

*By Margaret M. Marchi*

*October 12, 1999*

**AWARDS, SCHOLARSHIPS**

A Theta award was established in 1970 and is given each year to a non-member or to an organization which has made an outstanding contribution to the quality of life in McHenry County, the first award being made in 1971 to Ward Duel, Chairman of the Public Health Department of McHenry County.

Beginning in 1988, the Theta Awards were expanded to include two other categories: Government organization worthy of recognition and a Defender member having made unusual efforts on behalf of the environment.

The Defenders, in May 1978, (at the suggestion of Lou Marchi) set up a scholarship honoring Alta Rush Titus which is given each year to one (or two) college juniors, seniors, or graduate students from McHenry County who are majoring in environmental studies. This practice continues to this day.

Since 1994, Mike Mangold (a one-time recipient of the award) has matched the amount given by the Defenders, making it possible for us to give a second scholarship. (A list of scholarship winners is attached).

A Youth Conservation Fund Award, funded by an anonymous donor, has been made since 1991 to fund student environmental projects. In 1991, it was given to Sherri Siebold for work in

*Continued page 3*
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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Staff
Christy Matsuoka
Administrative Coordinator

Officers & Directors
Nancy Schietzelt, President
Joe Starzynski, Second Vice President
James Wigman, Treasurer
Dwight Dalton
Jim Donato
Ed Ellinghausen
Claire Flavin
Mary Forni
Lori McConville
Kim Willis

Newsletter Editors
Cynthia W. Kanner
Barb Day

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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@mcdefenders.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: 110 S. Johnson Street, Suite 106, Woodstock, IL. 60098.

Environmental Defenders of McHenry County
Mission Statement
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.

Environmental Defenders of McHenry County
Advertising Policy
The Defenders will accept advertisements in NATURE Matters if the product or services offered are consistent with the mission of The Defenders, as determined solely by our Board of Directors. Products or services advertised in NATURE Matters do not necessarily carry the endorsement of the Environmental Defenders of McHenry County. The Defenders is not responsible for the accuracy of the ads, or for the performance of the products or services advertised.

Rates:
Full Page $300
Half Page 175
Quarter Page 100
Eighth Page 75
Discounts for multiple advertisements may apply.

Thank you for your support!
Environmental Defenders of McHenry County
Green Business Partners

We appreciate the support of our Green Business Partners and hope you will support them! Please see page 11 for full list of partners.
the 4-H group and to Pat Dieckhoff for a project in her School Recycling Program. In 1993, it was given to Emily Steinwehe, Will House and Laurie Walczak. No awards were given in 1992 and 1994.

In 1995, donations given in memory of long-time Defender member, Lou Marchi, were used to establish a fund in Lou's honor. Interest from the fund is used to award Middle School and High School winners in the Lou Marchi Environmental Essay contest.

The McHenry County Defenders have themselves won several awards:

1983: Illinois Environmental Council "Environmental Organization of the Year"
1987 - Governor's Hometown Award (3rd place)
1989 - Daughters of the American Revolution State Conservation Award
1989 - Wildflower Preservation and Propagation Committee received Runner-up award in the national Take Pride in America Award
1989 and 1993 - Citizens Clearinghouse for Hazardous Waste "Environmental Justice Award”:
In 1989, for work in opposing landfill sitings and in supporting the restoration of abandoned gravel pits to prevent groundwater pollution; and in 1993, for work on medical waste disposal.

STAFF AND OFFICE

Sydna Becker served as President of the organization for a number of years and performed the work of Executive Director without salary or title. Records were kept at her house; Board meetings were also held there. In 1981, the Defenders took a bold step, rented an office on Williams Street in downtown Crystal Lake and hired a professional staff. June Girard was the first Executive Director, followed by Greg Lindsay. Pat Dieckhoff served under him as Assistant Director from 1981 to 1987.

In 1982, Ginger Veugeler was hired as Office Manager. The office was moved to Central Elementary School (now known as Hussman Elementary School in Crystal Lake). In 1985, the office moved to the Crystal Lake Nature Center, 330 N. Main Street. By that time, Therese Hall had succeeded Ginger as Office Manager. In 1988-89, the office moved to its present location: 132 Cass Street, Woodstock.

"Operation Topsoil," funded by a grant from the Joyce Foundation, brought Jerry Paulson to the staff. "Operation Topsoil" studied and advised officials about soil erosion problems - both agricultural and urban. When Greg Lindsay resigned the Directorship to continue his education. Jerry Paulson was named to succeed him in June, 1985. Mike Mangold and Sue Guderly completed the work on "Operation Topsoil," then in its second year.

In 1989, Therese left the organization to head up a county-wide volunteer program. In May, 1989, she was replaced by Emily Triffler who served as Office Manager until Dec. 1990. Beginning in 1991, Cindy Goulet filled her shoes. Upon her retirement, Susan Josephs filled this position for a short time.

Edi Normann is now in charge of the office and is Membership Coordinator. She has served in this position since Sept. 1991. Edi Normann resigned as Membership/Volunteer coordinator Fall (l) 96 Angle Reeks replaced Edi as Membership/Volunteer coordinator In August, 97 Cathy Korak replaced Angie as Membership/Volunteer Coordinator. She resigned as of October, 1999. Jan. 3, 2000, Becki Clayborn was hired as Volunteer Coordinator.

In 1992, Jerry Paulson left the employ of the Defenders; he was succeeded by Cindy Skrukrud. In September, 1999, Cindy Skrukrud resigned and Lenore Beyer-Clow replaced her in Nov. 1999.

RECYCLING

Recycling activities began, almost from the organization's inception, because of a two-fold concern. In the first place, it seemed (and still does) to be the best way to handle the solid waste problem. It also served as our principal source of funds for our other activities and as the source of funds for many cooperating clubs and community groups who co-sponsored local recycling drives. It was through the constant and unstinting help of the Veugeler family and their waste disposal company that our recycling efforts ever "got off the ground."

Recycling in Woodstock by the Woodstock Area Recyclers began under the auspices of the McHenry County Defenders and with the blessings of the City of Woodstock. This group was organized at the instigation of Lela Boerner McBride, a member of the City Environmental Enhancement Commission. The City of Woodstock made a $300 interest-free loan to the group as seed money for the project. They operated a site in Hornsby's parking lot on Route 47 in Woodstock. They had their own governing board consisting of Sherry Anderson, President, Joan Mansfield v.p., Beverly Meuch, Secretary, and Bob Thurow, Treasurer. Frank Gossen served as their Legal consultant. Others active in the group included Alice Lumsden who sought out groups to co-sponsor the drives, Joan Mansfield (at one time a member of the Woodstock City Council), Bev Meuch, Ed Radner, Jane Collins, Nancy Irwin, Ray Beth, and Jim Richards.

When the McHenry County Defenders located a permanent site on Throop Street in Woodstock, the group decided to encourage their clients to use the Defenders recycling site. Woodstock Area Recyclers disbanded after seven years of service.

Through the years, the Defenders have been engaged in recycling and co-sponsored recycling drives in Algonquin-Lake in the Hills, Crystal Lake, Harvard, Hebron, Huntley, McHenry, Richmond, Wonder Lake and Woodstock. Curb-side recycling programs were instituted in several communities. The County followed suit, and curb-side services (or drop-off centers) were made mandatory for certain items.

The Defenders now have a full-service Drop-off Center in Woodstock, open 5 days a week, and recycling drives in McHenry and Crystal Lake. The Woodstock Center operates with both volunteers and some paid staff.
Alice Howenstine served as recycling coordinator long before there was such a position or such a title. Scott Lindsay (Greg’s brother) was in charge of the Crystal Lake Recycling Center for some time and was the first paid Recycling staff member. He was followed by Lucy Cardello, Judy Stuck and Edi Normann. The first person to hold the title of Recycling Manager was Dave Kozlowski. Dave Wing and Jerry Becker followed Dave and functioned as managers of the Woodstock Area Recycling Center. Upon Jerry’s resignation, Dave Kozlowski returned to the position. His duties include both recycling and efforts to reduce waste production. Alice Howenstine serves as the Manager of the McHenry Recycling site.

In May, 1999, Dave resigned to go into business for himself and Andrew Bennett took his place. Dave will still work for the Defenders on occasions -such as PT party, special work days, etc.

**FUTURE**

From a handful of people working entirely as volunteers, the Defenders grew in 1985 to a membership of over 500 people. In 1995, they have 1100 members. Where do the Defenders go from here? In some ways, it seems that the more things change, the more they remain the same: preservation of natural areas, highways, landfills, recycling, energy conservation, sludge disposal, septic waste, nuclear energy, growth and development, zoning, gravel mining, airports, - all remain principal areas of concern.

“Citizens Working for a Healthy Environment,” the motto of the Defenders describes in a nutshell the work of the McHenry County Defenders.

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**E-Collection and Styrofoam**

E-collection has been a big success at both the Woodstock and McHenry drives. Everything from toasters to televisions get loaded by Ken Santowski on his truck. Ken, a champion of styrofoam collection and our recent Theta Award winner also saves block styrofoam as well as packing peanuts and even bubble wrap from the land fills.

**Recycling Drives**

**What:**
Fluorescent tubes, rechargeable batteries, car batteries, button batteries, and block white styrofoam. Packing peanuts and re-useable bubble wrap may be dropped off for no charge. We will also be accepting certain electronics, such as computers, phones, printers, toys, TVs and computer monitors for a donation to the Defenders. T/C metals in Crystal Lake has been friendly and helpful as can be when we bring aluminum or non ferrous metals to them. With metal prices up, this has been a steady source of income. Many folks have used the McHenry drive and donated their aluminum cans. Keep it coming!!

**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.

**Village of Lakewood:** 24 hour drop-off bins for residents and non-residents to deposit clean, white styrofoam. Lakewood Village Hall, 2500 Lake Avenue, Lakewood Public Works garage, 6570 Haligus Road, Redtail Golf Course, 7900 Redtail Drive.

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**Margaret Marchi served as Director of the Woodstock Public Library from 1962 through 1981.**
Getting to the Grassroots

By Barb Day

One reason to reprint Margaret Marchi’s history article is to remind us what our greatest service is to the residents of McHenry County. We were founded by a group of people who had a concern for the environmental health of the County and acted upon that concern. To obtain new members and continue to grow as an organization, it is important to keep before us what this grassroots group did and how they did it. Based on Margaret’s article, it is clear that the organization started in people’s homes, at their kitchen tables with like-minded people gathering to determine what they could do. What can we do now?

An article entitled “Six Things to do in 2010,” written by Jim Hightower, in The Progressive Populist lists the following six items:

1. Start by considering what’s reasonable for you. Few of us can be full-time activists, and the list of issues and problems is long and complex. So, just take one bite, choosing an issue that interests you the most, then start contributing what you can, (time, skills, contacts, money, enthusiasm, etc.) to making progress. Every little contribution helps – it all adds up.

2. Inform yourself. A little effort can quickly connect you to accessible, usable information and insights on any given topic, helping you gain a citizen’s level of expertise so you can talk to others about it. Read progressive periodicals, tune in to progressive broadcasts. Get information from public-interest groups and plug in to good websites and blogs.

3. Democracy belongs to those who show up. Join with others [the Defenders if you are not yet a member]. Everyone feels better when they’re part of a group, a movement, a community (whether real or virtual). In your own town or neighborhood, many others share your progressive outlook and are either already working together or willing to help form a group — seek them out, maybe at bookstores, book clubs, coffee shops, events, churches, blogs, website or other meeting places.

4. A community is more than a collection of issues and endless meetings. Get to know each other by combining the serious with the social. Remember the Yugoslavian proverb: You can fight the gods and still have fun! So discuss your issues and strategies at potluck sizzers, throw an annual festival of politics, establish sessions of beer and mug democracy at local taverns or political coffee talk at the coffee shop, etc.

5. Become the media. Create a local newsletter, blog online, bulletin board (or, a real one) an Internet radio broadcast, etc. Just as importantly, enlist high school or community college speech and journalism teachers to help others learn how to do radio and TV interviews and how to get local media to cover your issues. Also, get them to train you and others in public speaking, so you can have your own speakers’ bureau to address clubs, churches, schools, etc.

6. Hold your own “what to do” sessions in your community. National progressive groups haven’t figured out a cohesive strategy for focusing people’s anger about the meekness of the Washington Democratic leaders, so don’t wait on them. Instead, have your own discussion about what should be done nationally — if anything — and start zapping those ideas to other communities, heads of national groups, progressive media outlets and so forth. Let the ideas/discussion percolate up from a thousand localities!

But wait, the Environmental Defenders does many of these things now! The question is how many people know about it? Although land development and building and construction have been very slow for the last couple of years, that situation will change eventually. When we read something about plans a company has to change their operating process, do our neighbors know about it? Are they aware of how this may affect their lifestyle? If we find out about a change after it has occurred and become concerned, do we know what to do? Anytime someone reads something that can affect the whole community, it should alert them to the question, do our neighbors know about it? The Defenders has the information to assist people on many issues, even those within a municipality where the Defenders cannot participate because the issue is within the municipal boundary. We can provide residents with information. People need to know to contact us.

I am reminded of an event that occurred during my term as President of the Board of Directors. A resident of Burton’s Bridge, Lori McConville, now a Defenders’ Board Member, came to a Board Meeting seeking our help with a proposed development on a 15-acre parcel adjacent to her property. The developer was seeking a zoning change from Residential to B-3, which would permit the construction of a building to serve commercial building businesses and a storage facility for commercial equipment and vehicles. The petition never made it to the County Board because the hundreds of homeowners in the surrounding community successfully made a case that brought a unanimous 0-7 decision from the Zoning Board to not recommend the change in zoning.

The Defenders’ role in all of this was to provide guidelines that helped the homeowners learn their way around local government. The Defenders put them in touch with experienced activists and professionals who taught the residents about the land and water issues that were in danger in that area and why. We offered technical assistance, attended public meetings, submitted concerns about the development in writing to the Zoning Board, but, most importantly, we helped these homeowners understand the significance of protecting their property.

Lori’s statement in an article she wrote for NATURE Matters was that the most effective tool these people had was the dependable and determined team they built. That is the same kind of team that our founders created and look where that went in 40 years time! It is that extended team that we need to continue to build in McHenry County. Although there are no huge development projects in process that I am aware of that will remove more farm land from production at the moment, in time there will be again. There are some small-scale projects in process now. Do we know about them? Are affected residents sufficiently informed to know what actions to take?

Our Defenders’ Grassroots team needs to increase the number of people who are part of it as we head into the future.

Note:
For information about what’s happening at the County level, go to www.co.mchenry.il.us. For local information consult your village/own website/summer development link to keep updated on plans in your community. Your Township’s Web site is also a helpful resource. And, please contact the Defenders if questions arise about proposed projects that have concerns for environmental impact.
Annual Meeting

By Claire Flavin

“This is a good time to shape history,” asserts Marc Miller, Director of the IL Department of Natural Resources, and “to take strides amidst the chaos.” Mr. Miller, keynote speaker at the Defenders’ annual meeting, said that we have the tools, we [Illinois] just need more “advocates like the Defenders, so we can make a difference.”

The Defenders’ annual meeting welcomed all members to join together for a potluck dinner and program on “The State of Illinois State Parks.” The dinner was bustling with Defenders’ members, new and veteran, who gathered to share their collective commitment to protecting the environment, not to mention, the delicious food.

President of Defenders’ Board, Nancy Schietzelt, talked about the important work of The Defenders and gave a brief account of future programs and current projects underway. Nancy reminded members present to check the e-News for a more detailed account of these events. She noted that the Defenders’ work in our county’s communities is almost solely done by the dedicated volunteers of the organization, who gave over 2,300 hours of their time in 2010.

In the awards ceremony a few of these volunteers, and other members of the community, were honored for their much-appreciated efforts to assist the Defenders. Nancy presented the “Volunteer of the Year” award to Jim Merrifield and family, Jason, Johnny, and Jessica for their volunteer service. They have been cleaning the Defenders’ office weekly for over eight years, and have now started cleaning the Green Spot as well. Ken Santowski received the “Theta” Award for his efforts in waste reduction. Ken started hauling Styrofoam 14 years ago, and has been aiding the Defenders in monthly recycling drop-offs. The third and final award presented yearly by the Defenders, the “Good Government Award,” honored District 200 for establishing vegetable garden plots at Woodstock and Woodstock North High Schools. The plots will be used for MCC’s culinary arts program, as well as future school cafeteria produce. In concluding the awards ceremony, Nancy stated that our work isn’t done yet. “We still need more hands in the dirt.”

Marc Miller’s message in his state park address seemed to coincide with that notion; we need more advocates for the environment. His and the IDNR’s core values relate to policies based on sound science, the reliance on strong support, and the focus on conservation as a movement. Mr. Miller, a man who rejects his politician’s title, favoring instead conservationist, said that over time people have lost their connection to place, or land, and with that, they have lost the knowledge on how to interact with their environment. Northeastern Illinois is blessed with so many state parks. Along with that, there are plenty of natural landscapes McHenry County is working to preserve and protect as part of the conservation movement.

As a recent member, and a first-timer at the annual meeting, I am honored to be a part of this environmentally conscious group that works to preserve, protect, and educate. As advocates for a healthier environment, we can help keep our community engaged and involved with their own quality of life. I’m sure we’re all excited to find out, and possibly influence, what conservation and our environment will look like in the future.

Another thing to be excited about is that after years of sharing fabulous food once at the annual potluck, we’ve decided to help you share your recipes with friends and fellow members year round! Please submit any delicious recipes you have to Claire Flavin, Secretary for the Defenders’ Board. Either e-mail me at clairefflavin@gmail.com or drop your recipe in the box provided at the Defenders’ office in Woodstock. Once gathered, recipes will be available online. Thank you!

School District 200 receives The Defenders’ “Good Government” Award. L to R, Ellyn Wrzeski, Superintendent, Paul Meyer, President of the Board of Education, and Sue Palmore, Vice President of the Board of Education.

The Merrifield Family happily receives the “Volunteer of the Year” award.

Members enjoyed the delicious and healthy food contributed to the potluck dinner.
Springtime and the fresh thoughts that come with it make it a good time to check out a book from the Margaret Marchi Environmental Library at the Defenders’ office. The new office and library location have made it ever easier to browse the collection. Here are a few titles that have come to our attention recently.

**Green Living: The E Magazine Handbook for Living Lightly on the Earth.**

Nearly half of American homes buy organic, yet a large majority have only a limited knowledge of how to actually make informed, green choices. Green Living offers a step-by-step plan for every aspect of your life, from the laundry room to the kitchen. With advice on everything from planet-friendly cosmetics to home-based renewable energy, and straight talk on hemp, hybrids and hair coloring, Green Living is an ideal reference. You can find it at 570 EEM on the shelves.

**Eastern Wildflowers: A Photographic Celebration from New England to the Heartland.**

The beauty of wildflowers, their colors, fragrances, and shapes, the surprises they offer, invite us to slow down and appreciate nature. Each two-page spread in this hardcover book offers a stunning photograph and well-written general description. More a browse-at-home volume than a field guide, this book is labeled 582.13 HOU.

**Blue Planet Run: The Race to Provide Safe Drinking Water to the World.**

Not only do you learn about water, its characteristics and challenges to people all over the world (including the one billion people with little access to clean water), but the photography is magnificent. The images portray real life with a sense of compassion. You’ll read insightful original essays from noted writers as well. This table-top book offers reachable solutions to the world’s fresh water crisis. Find it on display in Defenders’ library at 628.1 SMO.

**The World Without Us.**

This book (read aloud on ten CDs), by Alan Weisman shows how our massive infrastructure would collapse and vanish without human presence. Which everyday items would become fossils? How could plastic, bronze sculpture, and manmade molecules be our most lasting gifts to the universe? Weisman draws on the expertise of engineers, atmospheric scientists, art conservators, zoologists, religious leaders and others to show what the planet might be like without us. Weisman’s enthralling tour of the world of tomorrow explores what little will remain of ancient times while anticipating, often poetically, what a planet without us would be like. Check it out in the media section of the library at 304.2 WEI.

The library always welcomes your donations of recent or classic environmental titles for either adult or children’s reading. We are particularly interested in recent DVDs of environmental interest.
Celebrate the Earth
Saturday, April 30
11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Prairievie Education Center
2112 Behan Road, Crystal Lake

Sponsored by the McHenry County Conservation District and
The Environmental Defenders of McHenry County
Event is held both indoors and outdoors, rain or shine!

Live music
OFF Square Music and more
Puppet shows! 12:30 p.m. & 2:30 p.m.
Guided nature hikes! 11:30 a.m. & 2:30 p.m.
Enjoy hands-on games, crafts and storytelling.
Over 20 Environmental Exhibitors.
Food and Beverage Vendors or bring your own “no waste” picnic lunch.

Help out on a restoration service project.

HOUSEHOLD RECYCLING DROP OFF:
A variety of items will be accepted for recycling including athletic shoes, batteries and computer monitors. Check out www.MCCDistrict.org prior to the event for a complete list of accepted items and any associated drop-off fees.

 Weed Wrench Rentals
Having trouble getting rid of that buckthorn? The Defenders can help! The weed wrench is a manually-operated, all-steel tool made to remove any woody plants by uprooting. Designed and manufactured by a restoration worker in California, the weed wrench is a great tool to use for trunk diameters up to 2 inches, and we have two sizes available to rent for a nominal fee.

Rental Fee Schedule for Defenders members:
$5 per week plus $50 refundable deposit.
For Non-members: $10 per week plus $150 refundable deposit.

For info on how to use the Weed Wrench, http://www.weedwrench.com/weedwrench/

Kill A Watt Energy Monitors Rentals
We are pleased to offer two Kill A Watt electric usage monitors on a rental basis. Find out how much power your appliances are actually using. Simply connect your appliances to the Kill A Watt, and it will assess how efficient they really are. The LCD display counts consumption by the kilowatt-hour, the same as your local utility. Now you will know if it is time for a new refrigerator or air conditioner and how much it is costing you to leave that phone charger plugged in. The U.S. Department of Energy reports that 20% of our electric bills come from items that are left plugged in when they are not in use, or items that are in standby mode. With the Kill A Watt, you can monitor the energy eaters in your home and cut down your electric bills at the same time. Plug whatever item you want into the device and it will tell you the efficiency of that item by displaying the kilowatt per hour. This device will help you determine which items are costing you the most to run.

Rental Fee Schedule for Defenders members: $5 per week plus $40 refundable deposit. For Non-members: $10 per week plus $40 refundable deposit.

SAVE THE DATE

Friday, April 8
Dirty Business, Documentary Film & Discussion
McHenry County College Conference Center
8900 US Hwy 14, Crystal Lake
6:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

“Dirty Business reveals the true social and environmental costs of coal power and tells the stories of innovators who are pointing the way to an alternative energy future.”

There is no charge to attend this screening, but donations are always appreciated.

SAVE THE DATE

Saturday, April 16
“Human Race” 5K walk/run - An inaugural event in Illinois, bringing the community together in support of charities serving McHenry County.

Join a Defenders’ team (one running, one walking) or start your own with a group of friends. You can sign up online: www.mchumanrace.org or contact the office for more information at 815-338-0393.

If you can’t be in the race, you can still participate by making a pledge to The Defenders as your chosen charity.
Hosted by The Volunteer Center of McHenry County.
Green Voice: Feedback from The Defenders’ Community

By Michael Hoag and Kim Willis

The Environmental Defenders of McHenry County are poised mid-blossom in an unfolding effort to reevaluate, refocus and recommit to our mission to protect our environment. In 2010, the Defenders sought input from members and the community during multiple “Green Voice” meetings and a member survey. Now, in 2011, that input will shape our collective efforts for the future. As an organization of volunteers, it’s vital that we work on what you want us to focus on, to help you as members become more involved in the issues that are important to you.

While the formats for these efforts varied, we have learned much about what our members want the Defenders to accomplish.

To our respondents, the most vital mission of the Defenders is advocacy, in all its forms. Advocacy on water, advocacy on zoning, and advocacy as it relates to education and informing decision makers about what makes good planning and green governance. These are the most important and valuable efforts for Defenders’ members. It is advocacy that respondents would like to see more of now and in the future. These days we all want to fight the fight.

Respondents also shared their input about our greatest needs. Again, water and the protection of aquifers from contamination and over-development were stressed. Land use, transportation issues, and the actions of local government and business were also important to our members. The role here for the Defenders is one of strong community advocate.

So as our strategic plan continues to grow, we’ll make sure the Defenders stay focused on this important advocacy work, to help you fight that fight.

Possible Defenders’ Efforts

Almost all of the collected suggestions for the Defenders involved greater advocacy regarding the aforementioned community needs. This advocacy first requires the building of relationships with local entities; schools, governments, other environmental groups, and the public. Therefore, a concerted outreach and relationship development effort would be the first step in providing greater issue advocacy for McHenry County communities. Most of the suggestions also included a component of educating the local entities on issues as a part of the advocacy efforts. Providing high quality, reliable information and education should be part of the outreach efforts.

Continuing the fight

Our members are saying, “you’re doing it right!” We say, “thanks to our members!”

The Defenders are a volunteer created, volunteer supported, volunteer run organization. Nothing truly gets accomplished without a volunteer or group of volunteers leading the effort.

Overall, the lesson learned is that our members want us to do “more of the same.” To accomplish that, we will have to do a better job in connecting with you, our members, to help you get involved in the advocacy that’s so important for our community and our environment.

Most Frequent Member Comments:

- The 3 most important/current organizational activities to respondents are:
  1. Advocacy Efforts (zoning, planning, water resources, storm water)
  2. Educational Outreach Efforts (presentations, Earth Day)
  3. Recycling Efforts (monthly drives)

- The 3 top activities we are not doing (or not doing enough of) that we should are:
  1. More Environmental Advocacy
  2. Energy Conservation Efforts
  3. Climate Change Advocacy and Education

- The top 3 pressing environmental concerns in the County are:
  1. Water Use – Aquifer Depletion
  2. Land Use – Sprawl Development
  3. Loss of Farmland

- The 3 most common reasons respondents gave for not participating in activities are:
  1. Time Limitations
  2. Scheduling Conflicts
  3. Physical/Health Concerns

- Suggestions, in numerical order, for improving the organization are:
  1. More internet/web presence
  2. More media presence
  3. More School Outreach
  4. More Issue Outreach

Feedback on Specific County Needs:

- Address Water. We need to protect aquifers from contamination and over use due to over development, loss of wetlands, and pumping water away from water rich areas. Need to protect water bodies from pollution.

- Greater interaction to children, to schools, in order to educate them and connect them to their local environment.

- Address issues with local governments on everything from transparency and open communication, land use planning and project implementation, to enforcement of pollution laws. Distrust of local governments is also an issue.

- Address poor land use in the County, including the overdevelopment of commercial and residential, loss of natural areas and farmland, and all their repercussions. There is a significant need for intelligent land use and planning.

- Address transportation issues, particularly the lack of public transit and alternative transit. Transportation planning and construction, ultimately resulting in more congestion and pollution, also needs to be addressed.

- Address the lack of recycling for businesses, schools and municipalities, as well as difficult items, and to eliminate the use of plastic shopping bags in the County.

- Further address conservation of energy and alternative energy technologies, including wind and solar in our local communities.

Format details

Green Voice Meetings were held in locations throughout the county to obtain member and community input. Meetings took place in Algonquin, Cary, Crystal Lake, Harvard, Marengo, and Woodstock.

In addition, a survey was offered to current members. Of those surveyed, 78% have been members for 7 years or more and 22% for 1 to 5 years. Two-member households made up 50% of the responses, generally living in Woodstock or Crystal Lake. 93.5% of those responding to the survey subscribed to the Defenders’ weekly e-newsletter.

Thank you to all who participated in Green Voice meetings and in our survey!
Update on Watershed Planning

By Lynn Rotunno

Southeastern McHenry County is home to scenic natural landscapes, rolling farmland, and lakes that provide recreational opportunities for community members. The Silver Creek and Sleepy Hollow Creek watersheds (see map) in southeastern McHenry County exemplify the rich natural diversity of this region. The watersheds are home to rare graminoid fen wetlands, a gravel hill prairie, towering pine forests, sedge meadows, oak savannas, and much more. These natural areas are a source of community recreation and important habitat for several endangered wildlife species. Natural areas also help to protect water quality and replenish groundwater supply. However, as with many areas in northeastern Illinois, this region faces the challenge of meeting community needs and protecting important natural resources that are valued by many community members.

Since Fall 2010, the Environmental Defenders of McHenry County, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, local community members, and other organizations have been developing a Silver Creek/Sleepy Hollow Creek watershed plan that will support protections for streams, lakes, wetlands, and groundwater resources. Over 120 participants from multiple jurisdictions across the watersheds have taken part in this process to create local solutions to shared water resource challenges.

As part of the planning process, an inventory of watershed resources, as well as, new study information will be available to help community members plan to protect water quality and watershed health. The inventories will describe the natural, physical, and biological features of the Silver Creek and Sleepy Hollow Creek watersheds. Population information, current land use characteristics, watershed conditions, and other information will be included. Volunteers are developing these inventories by helping to assess the quality of watershed streams, such as the Silver Creek and Sleepy Hollow Creek. If you are interested in hands-on volunteer opportunities to support the planning efforts, send an e-mail to watershedinfo@mcdefenders.net or call the Defenders’ office at 815-338-0393.

If you live, work or play in the Silver Creek or Sleepy Hollow Creek watersheds, please attend an upcoming meeting to participate in this planning process. Meetings are being held monthly in the watersheds through December of 2011. If you would like to learn more about the watersheds or the planning process, new watershed planning brochures (at right) are available at the Defenders’ office. You can also visit http://foxriverecosystem.org/planning.htm for more information.

These planning projects are funded by Section 604(b) of the Clean Water Act by way of a grant from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, Bureau of Water, to the CMAP. Planning Partners include the EDMC, Fox River Ecosystem Partnership, and the Fox River Study Group. Both the Silver Creek Watershed and the Sleepy Hollow Creek Watershed drain to the Fox River. Working to protect these watersheds will support local communities and help restore Fox River water quality and wildlife habitat.
The Environmental Defenders of McHenry County

Green Business Partner Program

- **Green Business & Civic Partners**
  - **Adele Petersen, Realtor®**
    - Crystal Lake
  - **Advanced Eyecare Clinic**
    - Lake In The Hills
  - **Computer Recycling Center, LLC**
    - Crystal Lake
  - **Copy Express, Inc.**
    - Woodstock
  - **Crystal Lake Park District**
    - Crystal Lake
  - **Essential Elements**
    - Woodstock
  - **Expressly Leslie**
    - Woodstock
  - **Falcon Waste & Recycling, Inc.**
    - Woodstock
  - **Green Box Boutique**
    - Woodstock
  - **Green Business Task Force**
    - Crystal Lake Chamber of Commerce
      - Crystal Lake
  - **Hyperstitch, Inc.**
    - Marengo
  - **McHenry Co. Dept. of Water Resources**
    - Woodstock
  - **Roxy’s Books**
    - Woodstock
  - **Tarts & Truffles**
    - Woodstock
  - **Woodstock Chamber of Commerce**
  - **Woodstock Farmers Market**
    - Woodstock

*For more information about becoming a Green Business Partner please contact us!* 
Environmental Defenders of McHenry County
110 S. Johnson Street, Suite 106
Woodstock, IL 60098
www.mcdef.org
(815) 338-0393 – mcdef@owc.net
Please visit us at: www.mcdef.org

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**Membership Form**

**Levels of Membership**

- **Supporting** – $250
- **Patron** – $100
- **Organization** – $50
- **Family/Basic** – $50
- **Senior** – $25
- **Student/Other** – $10

Subtotal: $___________

**Total donation:** $___________

**Name #1**

**Address**

**City** _______________ **State** _______ **Zip** __________

**Township**

**E-mail #1**

**E-mail #2**

**Phone**

**Year moved to McHenry County:**

**Number of individuals residing in household:**

- My check is enclosed

Please return completed form to:

**Environmental Defenders of McHenry County**
110 S. Johnson Street, Suite 106
Woodstock, IL 60098 OR

Join on-line at www.mcdef.org

Questions? Call 815-338-0393

*Code: nwslrspring2011*
## Calendar of EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>APRIL</th>
<th>MAY</th>
<th>JUNE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friday, April 1</td>
<td>Wednesday, May 4</td>
<td>Wednesday, June 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, April 6</td>
<td>“Green Wednesdays”</td>
<td>“Green Wednesdays”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday, April 8</td>
<td>Coffee 101. 7 p.m.</td>
<td>at Duke’s Alehouse &amp; Kitchen, Crystal Lake. 5-7 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday, April 16</td>
<td>“Green Wednesdays”</td>
<td>“Green Wednesdays”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday, April 29</td>
<td>“Green Wednesdays”</td>
<td>at Duke’s Alehouse &amp; Kitchen, Crystal Lake. 5-7 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday, April 30</td>
<td>Earth Day Kick-Off at Woodstock H.S. Movie: How to Boil a Frog: Make Friends, Make Fun, Make Trouble. 7:00 p.m. Co-sponsored with Woodstock High School’s Green Club.</td>
<td>Pancakes on Dean. Pancake breakfast and nature walk.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Welcome New Members!

Jeff & Karla Schumacher, Woodstock
Tony Bilotti & Emma Kowalenko, Highland Park
Belinda Bockman, Marengo
Jean Hervert Niemann, Woodstock
Mary Daoui, Woodstock

For a Defenders’ Annual Report, please go to www.mcdef.org, “About Us.”

### SAVE THE DATE: Earth Day, Saturday, April 30

**Notes:**
- Coffee 101. 7 p.m. Conscious Cup in Crystal Lake.
- Dirty Business Documentary at MCC (details page 8.)
- The Human Race, 5-K run, (details page 8.)
- Earth Day Kick-Off at Woodstock H.S. Movie: How to Boil a Frog: Make Friends, Make Fun, Make Trouble. 7:00 p.m. Co-sponsored with Woodstock High School’s Green Club.
- Celebrate Earth Day, 11-4 (details page 8.)
- Pancakes on Dean. Pancake breakfast and nature walk.
- “Moral Ground: Ethical Action for a Planet in Peril.” Reading & Discussion with Kathleen D. Moore, Editor. To be held at MCC, sponsored by the McHenry County Environmental Alliance. Other details TBA.

**Address Service Requested**

110 S. Johnson Street, Suite 106
Woodstock, IL 60098
www.mcdef.org