Got Fertilizer? Your Help is Needed to Clean up the Gulf of Mexico and the Fox River!

By Cindy Skrukrud, Clean Water Program Director, Sierra Club, Illinois Chapter

Illinois has a nutrient problem. High levels of nutrients entering our waterways are causing algae blooms in our rivers, lakes and ponds. Nutrient pollution from Illinois cities and farms also travels all the way down to the Gulf of Mexico where it contributes to a dead zone larger than the state of Connecticut. The year 2015 saw the adoption of both a statewide strategy and a Fox River plan to resolve our nutrient problems. Now we need the help of citizens, municipalities and farmers to take the necessary steps to curtail the problems excess nutrients cause.

Too much of a good thing. Nitrogen and phosphorus are called major nutrients because they are critical building blocks of plant life. They are the main fertilizers that farmers and gardeners must replenish as they harvest crops, which deplete these necessary ingredients from the soil. Some nutrients are also necessary to form the base of the food chain in aquatic systems, but in today’s landscape much more nitrogen and phosphorus are getting into our rivers and lakes than is needed for healthy waterways. The major sources of nutrients in our waterways are runoff from agricultural lands and urban areas, and discharges from our wastewater treatment plants.

Addressing Illinois’ nutrient issues. Illinois has been taking some small steps to address its nutrient problems for a number of years, but in 2015 it took a big one. After two years working with a policy team of scientists and representatives of agricultural, environmental and wastewater interests, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) and Illinois Department of Agriculture released the Illinois Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy. The Strategy has two goals—

• Reduce phosphorus and nitrate loss from Illinois by 45% by 2035
• Address impacts of nutrients on local water quality

The first goal is aimed at addressing Illinois’ contribution to the problems in the Gulf of Mexico where nutrients from cities and farms in the Mississippi River basin create the Gulf Dead Zone. Also called Gulf Hypoxia (“hypoxia” meaning low oxygen), the problem is caused when over fertilization of the gulf leads to an over abundance of phytoplankton. As the plankton die and decompose, oxygen levels in the gulf fall to levels too low to support the fish and shrimp found there. Illinois is among twelve states in the Hypoxia Task Force that has a goal to reduce the size of the gulf dead zone to one-third its current size by 2035.

Continued page 3
Knowledgeable local environmentalists may be and illustrations for space, clarity or libel. Also be mailed to: 110 S. Johnson Street, Suite 106, Woodstock, IL 60098.

We reserve the right to condense or revise articles published based on space and Board review. However, EarthConnect will not directly advocate Environmental Defenders of McHenry County.

Opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect the position and/or policy of the Environmental Defenders of McHenry County.

Membership or address changes, please contact our office at: 110 S. Johnson Street, Suite 106, Woodstock, IL 60098 (815) 338-0393 envirolefmc@gmail.com www.mcdef.org

Like us on Facebook.

Christy Matsuoka, Administrative Coordinator
Teagen Andrews, Waste Reduction Consultant
Cynthia W. Kanner, Part-time Office Assistant

Nancy Schietzelt, President
Lori McConville, Vice President
Alice Lumsden, Secretary
James Wigman, Treasurer
Dwight Dalton
Ed Ellinghausen
Mary Forni
Kim Hankins
Sue Jensen
Christine Kustra
Nicky Obenauf
Rico Rotta
Ken Santowski
Joe Starzynski

Cynthia W. Kanner
Barb Day

Opinions expressed in EarthConnect do not necessarily reflect the position and/or policy of the Environmental Defenders of McHenry County. However, EarthConnect 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: cynthkanner@gmail.com. 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.

Correction to Business
Member listings should be sent to cynthkanner@gmail.com.

About Better Living: Lee Frisch
847-639-2564
lee@aboutbetterliving.com

American Ad Bag
www.adbag.com
800-382-6844
customerservice@adbag.com
1510 Lamb Rd., Woodstock, IL 60098

Advanced Eyecare Clinic
www.advancedeyecareclinic.com
5 West Acorn Lane, Lake in the Hills
847-854-0202

Algonquin/LITH
Chamber of Commerce
2114 W. Algonquin Road
Lake in the Hills, IL 60156
847-658-5300
info@ALChamber.com

Artland Story Group
http://artlandstorygroup.org
815-354-4831
Woodstock

Alpine Accessories
www.alpineaccessories.com
9219 South State Rt. 31, Lake in the Hills, IL 60156
847.854.4754, sales@AlpineAccessories.com

Illinois State Senator Pam Althoff
www.senatoralthoff.com
815-453-6330 or 217-782-8000
pamela@pamelaalthoff.net

The Backdrop
106 Cass St, Woodstock, IL 60098
815-338-3007

Computer Recycling Center, LLC
7510 Virginia Rd. Ste 2, Crystal Lake, IL 60014
815-453-6300
info@computerrecyclingcenter.net

Conscious Cup Coffee Roasters
www.consciouscup.com
5005 Northwest Hwy, Ste 101
Crystal Lake, IL 60014
815-356-0115

Copy Express, Inc.
www.copyexpressyes.com
301 E. Calhoun St. • Woodstock, IL 60098
Phone: 815-338-7161.
copytalk@copyexpressyes.com

Crystal Lake Park District
http://crystallakeparks.org/
One East Crystal Lake Ave, Crystal Lake, IL 60014
815.459.0680 • info@CrystallakeParks.org

Green Box Boutique
www.greenboxboutique.com
108 N. Benton St, Woodstock, IL
815-337-7303

Environmental Defenders of McHenry County Business and Civic Members

Falcon Green Resources
815-334-8689 or Toll Free: 877-667-4488
2 Kennedy Dr., Harvard, IL
contact@falconwasterecycling.com

Dave’s Bait & Tackle
Like on FB
815-455-2040
4419 Route 176, Crystal Lake

Handmade On Main
http://handmadeonmain.com/
320 South Main St. Algonquin, IL 60102
847-456-1976

Hyperstitch, Inc.
www.hyperstitch.com
117 W. Prairie Street, Marengo
815-568-0590

Marvin’s Toy Store
www.marvinstoystore.com
64A N. Williams St. in downtown Crystal Lake
779-220-4179

McHenry County College
www.mcc.edu
8900 U.S. Highway 14, Crystal Lake

McHenry Co. Dept. of Water Resources
2200 N. Seminary Ave., Woodstock, IL 60098
815-334-4213

Napoli’s Pizza
napoliswoodstock.com
930 Lake Ave, near Rte 47, Woodstock
815-338-2430

Adele Petersen, Realtor
www.adelepetersen.com
RE/MAX Unlimited Northwest
Woodstock, Crystal Lake, Huntley
815-355-5729

Pioneer Tree Farm
www.pioneertreefarm.com
4614 Pioneer Road, McHenry

USAgain
www.usagain.com
West Chicago

Windridge Memorial Park
7014 S Rawson Bridge Rd, Cary

Woodstock Chamber of Commerce
www.woodstockchamber.com
121 W. Calhoun Street, Woodstock

Lee@aboutbetterliving.com
Summer 2016

IN THIS ISSUE

Articles
Got Fertilizer? By Cindy Skrukrud
cover

Defenders’ Strategic Plan, By Lori McConville
4

News & Announcements
BYOBag & Transportation Committee updates
5

Volunteers Needed at the County Fair
6

Upcoming events
6 & 7

Past events
8, 9

Recycling News
10

Calendar of Events & Activities
Back page

Cover photo of Bill Howenstine at annual August Corn Roast, Pioneer Tree Farm.
Too much fertilization (the scientific term is “eutrophication”) also causes problems in Illinois lakes, river and streams where it leads to a surplus of aquatic plants and algae. At night, when these photosynthesizers have to respire just like us to survive, they suck oxygen out of the water, dropping oxygen levels so low that fish, mussels and aquatic insects can’t survive. Algal-laden water also causes taste and odor problems for communities that use rivers and lakes as their drinking water source, such as the 300,000 residents in the Elgin and Aurora areas along the Fox River. In some instances, harmful algal blooms, caused by blue-green algae (cyanobacteria), can occur. This type of bacteria can release toxins into the water that can kill pets and even people if ingested. Blue-green algae blooms have occurred as close by as Candlewick Lake in Boone County. In addition, simply high levels of nitrates, when present in either surface or groundwater used as a source of drinking water, are harmful to babies.

Focus at the watershed scale. The Strategy utilizes a target watershed approach to address in-state impacts of eutrophication. Target watersheds have been identified where high levels of nitrate (soluble form of nitrogen) and phosphorus are causing problems. The Fox River watershed in Illinois is one of the first regions in the state to take steps to address its problems with eutrophication.

For 15 years, representatives from Fox River cities, counties, wastewater reclamation districts, environmental and watershed organizations have worked together to monitor, model and assess ways to make sure dissolved oxygen levels meet state minimum standards and to reduce nuisance algae in the Fox River. This work is being done by a non-profit established in 2003 called the Fox River Study Group (FRSG).

Problems caused by excess nutrients in the Fox River are heightened by the many dams on the river. Sixteen dams are found along the length of the 223-mile Fox River from its origin in Wisconsin to Ottawa, Illinois where it empties into the Illinois River. In Illinois, over half the river is impounded by dams, making the river behave more like a lake than a free-flowing river. The still waters in its many dam pools provide an ideal environment for algae to thrive. Just recently, the City of Elgin has struggled to address taste and odor problems caused by algae in the drinking water it draws from the Fox.

In December 2015, FRSG released its Fox River Implementation Plan. The “FRIP” describes the results to date of the group’s research and computer model simulations of the most effective means to clean up the Fox River. Investigations have focused on reducing phosphorus inputs to the river and removing dams that have outlived their original purposes. The FRIP includes a number of near-term steps to be taken while work addressing a number of questions continues. These include:

- Reducing phosphorus from wastewater plants that have not implemented any controls on their phosphorus discharges. Already over 1/3 of the plants that discharge wastewater into the Fox River or its tributaries take some steps to reduce phosphorus in their effluent. These are the newest plants that have expanded in the 21st century, while many of the biggest dischargers in older river communities do not currently employ any phosphorus removal technologies. It is anticipated that all plants will need to reduce their phosphorus discharges to even lower levels. The Illinois EPA is requiring dischargers to assess the feasibility and cost to reduce phosphorus to levels as low as 0.1 mg/l.
- The IEPA is developing a phosphorus cleanup plan for the Chain O’ Lakes designed to meet the state’s water quality standard of 0.05 mg/l for phosphorus in lakes.
- The Forest Preserve District of Kane County and the Village of North Aurora have entered into intergovernmental agreements with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources on removal of the Carpenter and North Aurora dams.
- The FRSG is asking communities and farmers to track projects they implement to reduce pollution from stormwater runoff and has developed a tool that will help them quantify their phosphorus reductions from their projects.

Continued work is being done to improve the group’s computer model simulation of oxygen levels in the river in order to be able to make a recommendation regarding the impacts of removing dams on levels of dissolved oxygen (DO). The United States Geological Survey has installed a probe that will continuously measure the levels of oxygen in the river for the next three summer seasons at a point between Algonquin and Carpenter’sville. The FRSG model suggests there is a sag in DO levels in this reach where samples have not previously been collected. An update to the FRIP will be prepared in 2020.

Continue on page 8.
Defenders’ Strategic Plan

By Lori McConville, Defenders’ Vice President

Mission: In order to support all living things, the Environmental Defenders is dedicated and committed to the preservation and improvement of the natural environment in McHenry County.

It’s not much of a change, but it’s one we made to our mission statement after attending a workshop on writing a Strategic Plan. Instead of starting with our name, we now begin with our purpose, “In order to support all living things.”

For two Saturdays, several board members and staff took advantage of a grant given by the McHenry County Community Foundation by attending workshops on how to write a Strategic Plan. We joined several other non-profits and the first day started with each organization saying out loud and writing down their strengths. And, you know what? We actually discovered how strong The Defenders is today. As a Board we often discuss how to improve and move forward, and those discussions are good to have, of course. But to take time and see ourselves among our peers, and to acknowledge that we are a solid organization, was very confirming.

So what is strong about the Defenders? We have:
• A committed and loyal volunteer core (can’t do it without you).
• Stable finances and increasing income (we’re not in jeopardy and we watch every penny earned and spent).
• Fruitful collaborations with other organizations (evidence of an influential organization).
• Effective leadership and a committed Board (diverse in opinions and strengths).
• Longevity, credibility, and a solid reputation of focusing on our mission. (The public and governments know us.)

I would say that is pretty darn good, and if you are a member, you are a building block that is helping to secure a healthy environment in our county.

Now there is the other side of the coin, so to speak, our weaknesses. Keep in mind, the list is not as long, but it does point us to the three goals we have chosen for our Strategic Plan.

• We have an aging membership, and we need to make sure we are letting the next generation know about us.
• We have influence, but limited staff to do the big work of wielding that influence.
• Our volunteers do a lot of work and sometimes get burned out. We need to attract members to share the load.
• We have financial needs that we often do not communicate very well. A healthy financial existence means a viable future.

Environmental concerns don’t conclude; they simply change. Our towns grow, governments and elected officials come and go, citizens’ needs and wants evolve, and the demand on our natural world simply increases.

For us to turn our focus as needed, we feel having a steady person doing the “out in the public” work would amplify our mission and inspire more businesses and individuals to take notice of our organization. The leadership of the Board and the volunteers can only do so much. We need someone to take the direction of the Board and the influence of our organization out into the community on a regular and consistent basis.

Having an Executive Director will help magnify our influence and contribute to how we make change. That means being at public meetings, in front of elected officials, following up on initiatives, talking to businesses, organizations and citizens about our efforts, and communicating the benefits of supporting our organization financially and as members. We are not in existence to offer a tangible thing or build a financial pocket of wealth to distribute. We are in existence to protect, educate and preserve the natural world in our county. And that is about people going out into our community educating and doing. It is a quiet mission of building value, long-term commitment and an ideal to live by. This heartfelt and intellectual understanding is paramount for a healthy life for people, animals and plants. As Defenders’ members, we get that.

So, taking steps to hire a part time Executive Director is one of our goals. It will be a slow process, and steps are already in place. But we need to figure out how to pay for a professional salary. And that is a second goal in our Strategic Plan.

Our third goal is to increase our membership and attract young professionals and the millennial generation. This would be a particular effort for the Executive Director. We want a committee of young people to build and help The Defenders to prepare for the future. To ensure the existence of our organization, like all other groups, we need to make sure we stay attractive and relevant.

Coming together as like-minded people and members of the Environmental Defenders, we also need to take time to celebrate the natural world. It’s important to share our enthusiasm to motivate each other and to continue our commitment. Writing this Strategic Plan is not an effort to change who we are; rather, to affirm and expand a bit. We want pancake breakfasts, corn roasts, and gatherings at a local brewery. We want potlucks and paid events. We want walks among the oaks, paddling our waters, academic talks and shared personal explorations. We want old books and new stories. It’s important to have tradition for foundation and identity, and newness and change to keep us vibrant and sustainable.

Our thanks to the McHenry County Community Foundation for getting us together with other non-profits and creating the space for us to focus on our strengths and define our goals. This has helped us get moving on our Strategic Plan that will take us into the future. Many thanks to our Board for making this process a priority. All good boards have a path for the future and have a written plan to get there. With that said, we will keep you posted on our progress. As always, your feedback is part of the process. Send an email, have a conversation, write a note, talk to us and let us know your thoughts.

For all living things on our planet, the Environmental Defenders is in your backyard.
Transportation Committee Takes Off
By Gary Kanner

The Defenders has formed a Transportation Committee to address mass transit, bicycle and pedestrian paths, and environmental impact of roads, among other issues related to the transportation needs of McHenry County. The Committee, co-chaired by Christine Kustra and Gary Kanner, and including John Darger, Eberhard Veit, and Alice Lumsden, with Nancy Schietzelt and Lori McConville as advisors, meets the first Monday of each month at 7PM at the Starbucks off Route 31 in Crystal Lake. We hope to play a unique role in helping county organizations, such as MCDOT, identify and minimize potential environmental problems associated with county and state transportation plans. The immediate focus of the Committee is to narrow down major goals for the three-year Strategic Plan.

More Towns Proclaim BYOBag
By Cynthia Kanner

In April, the City of Woodstock proclaimed BYOBag Woodstock through April 2017 while the Village of Lake in the Hills observed BYOBag during the month of May. The Village of Island Lake has plans for a back-to-school BYOBag month as well. The Environmental Defenders is hoping for a county-wide BYOBag month this summer, so be sure to pack yours in your car to help mark a milestone in our nearly three-year campaign to reduce the use of plastic (and paper) bags in our beautiful county. Changing the plastic bag habit is good for the environment, our towns and businesses alike.

On June 23rd, BYOBag helped organize a showing of the documentary film, Plastic Paradise, which was co-sponsored with MCC’s Sustainability Center. “The June 23rd movie Plastic Paradise was a good one. It featured the macro problems of plastic in the oceans. It’s worth knowing of a Swedish study finding that the oceans are ruled by microscopic pieces of plastic. Their findings show the affect on European perch (Science News, June 25, 2016.) Larvae exposed to microplastic (polystyrene) hatched less, were smaller (choosing polystyrene to more nutritious food), and were sluggish. European perch have recently experienced a population dive. Researchers argue the microplastics could be to blame. No doubt there are other studies to be researched. All of this and the film should lead us to try to not purchase or carry things in plastic bags.” Dwight Dalton, Defenders’ Board Member, Waste Reduction Comm.

Spring Education and Advocacy Efforts
By Nancy Schietzelt

The Defenders carried out the following educational and advocacy efforts during the Spring of 2016 in addition to other activities that are covered in more detail in this issue. Many thanks to all the volunteers who help make these efforts possible!

• Activated our membership to help protect Community Solar in Illinois.
• Continued to facilitate monthly Green Drinks events.
• Presented a program about groundwater protection to the Marengo Lions Club.
• Worked as part of the Bioneers Committee, coordinated by the MCC Sustainability Center, to plan for an event on global climate change in June.
• Continued our participation with the McHenry County Health Department’s Solid Waste Task Force.
• Presented a program about the Environmental Defenders to the Woodstock Noon Rotary Club.
• Continued to facilitate the McHenry County Chapter of the Citizens Climate Lobby.
• Presented a program about recycling to the Marengo Women’s Club.
• Continued facilitating the Silver and Sleepy Hollow Creeks Watershed Coalition by promoting and taking part in monthly workdays at Sterne’s Fen in the Sleepy Hollow Watershed.
• Planted native prairie plants at the O’Brien Road Prairie as part of the Monarch Initiative in collaboration with the Friends of Hackmatack.
• Presented a program about Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge to the Marengo Lions Club.
• Continued working with the City of Crystal Lake and downtown businesses to facilitate recycling.
• Tabled at International Migratory Bird Days at Moraine Hills State Park and Volo Bog State Natural Area on the effect of global climate change on birds and the importance of healthy wetlands to birds.
• Continued to provide the Northwest Herald with an Environmental Tip for weekly publication.
• Advocated, along with members of the McHenry County Watershed Roundtable hosted by the Defenders, for the County Board to create and fund a Water Resources Specialist for the County.
• Presented a program on invasive species to Woodstock High School.
We Need YOU at the County Fair!

Each year, The Environmental Defenders depends on its members to donate their time working at the County Fair. Your time equals a monetary contribution per hour worked for The Defenders! We have full days and lots of time slots to fill. You can utilize Volunteer Spot to sign up or contact the office at 815-338-0393. You may also receive calls from a Defenders’ staff or board member asking if you can help out.

How to sign up for volunteering:

County Fair gate attendants link is http://vols.pt/18E3UP
“Since 2007, The Defenders has been working the admission gates for the McHenry County Fair. This is a lot of fun and has turned into a very good fundraiser for our group. (And you get free admission to the Fair on the day you work!)”

Defenders’ booth volunteers link is http://vols.pt/TQLgeX
“We need volunteers at The Defenders’ booth in the Conservation World Tent to talk with fairgoers about who we are and what we do. This is a great opportunity to get our name and mission out to the public!”

If you’re working the County Fair for us, please order The Defenders’ t-shirt shown here if possible!
T-shirt link is:
Shirts are $12-$16 and aprons are also available.

Thank You, Volunteers!

The Green Spot bookstore held a Hallway Book Sale in June at the Woodstock Square Mall. Thank You to all the Defender volunteers for a successful book sale! Volunteers brought in boxes of books, set up tables and placed books by category. Our Green Spot volunteers worked the sale along with their regular book store duties. Special thanks to the Pioneer Center volunteers who moved boxes and helped with set up and clean up.

Scholarship Winner Announced

The Environmental Defenders of McHenry County is proud to announce the award of its annual scholarship to Annie Schirmer, a recent graduate of Marengo High School. Annie will receive a $1,000 scholarship and has plans to pursue a degree in wildlife ecology at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. The check was presented at the June board meeting of the Environmental Defenders of McHenry County. Congratulations Annie!

Young Professional/Millennial Membership Now Available

The Environmental Defenders prides itself on the diversity of activities, committees and individuals that make our organization what it is. For the latter, we welcome people of all ages to join, and have therefore added a new level of membership—Young Professional/Millennial. It is this age group, whether single working young adults, young families, or recent college graduates, who will take the organization into the future. With abundant volunteer opportunities available, the chance to advocate with others for a healthy environment, and enjoy the outdoors together through outings such as canoe trips, there is something for everyone who joins The Environmental Defenders of McHenry County!

Remembering Jim Donato

As announced through eNews in April, The Environmental Defenders shares the sad news that Jim Donato, Board member and longtime Membership Committee Chair, passed away in March just prior to his 69th birthday. Many of our members would see Jim hard at work at our recycling drives and “green” events around McHenry County, tirelessly signing up new members. He directed the Membership Committee with great passion, knowing that the organization is only as strong as its membership. Jim recruited 11 new members in one day, something that made him very proud. Jim leaves behind two brothers, including former Defenders’ President, Bill Donato, a sister, two children and three grandchildren.
**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**SUMMER Garage Sale—July 14, 15, & 16**

8AM to 4PM, 3702 Route 14, Crystal Lake

The summer garage sale is held at Algonquin Township Road District and needs volunteers to help set up beforehand. Please contact the office at 815-338-0393 if you can help or donate items; or, email us at envirodefmc@gmail.com. [www.mcdef.org](http://www.mcdef.org)

**August 11-12—Gladstone Fen Tour**

Defenders’ members are invited to tour the beautifully restored Gladstone Fen on August 11th or 12th at 6PM either evening. Gladstone Fen, owned by Lorna Gladstone and her brother, Evan Gladstone, is an Illinois State Nature Preserve protected forever by an easement held by the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission. It is approximately 7 acres in size and located on Cherry Valley Road in Bull Valley. Over decades the fen became overgrown with invasive species and was becoming drier as the stream through the site was cutting more deeply into the soil and dewatering the surrounding area. Through a grant, the Nature Preserves Commission was able to restore original hydrology to the area. And with many hours of effort from Lorna and multiple volunteers, the invasive species were removed. Now we’ll be able to view the fen in all its glory as the purple and gold native flowers of August are in bloom! If you would like to attend one of the tours, please RSVP to the office at 815-338-0393 or at envirodefmc@gmail.com by Monday, August 8th. It is necessary to know the number of participants to plan for refreshments and to determine how many tour guides are needed. Information about parking will be provided to those who RSVP.

**August 20—Annual Corn Roast**

Our annual summer picnic, also known as The Corn Roast and Pot Luck, will be held again at the Howenstine’s Farm on Saturday, August 20th. Pioneer Farm is located at 4614 Pioneer Road, three miles north of McHenry, halfway between Ringwood Rd. and Rt. 31. We’ll gather at 4PM for fun, games and talking, and will plan to eat about 5:30. Please bring a dish to share and enjoy a day of fun for the whole family and other Environmental Defenders’ members. Bring your own reusable plates, cups and utensils, please! Roasted corn, lemonade and coffee will be provided. Picnic tables are available, but you might want to bring a blanket and chairs. Please contact Bill and Alice Howenstine with any questions at 815-385-8512.

**September 17—It’s Our River Day**

Please Join us for the 9th Annual “It’s Our River Day” Celebration, 1PM to 4PM

The Environmental Defenders and The Village of Algonquin are pleased to once again co-sponsor this state-wide annual cleanup event, which takes place locally along the banks of the Fox River in downtown Algonquin. Conservation Community Day is now aligned with River Day, so conservation/outdoor organization booths are available for information and activities. Event is free and groups are welcome! Cornish Park (Route 62 and S. Harrison).

**Paddle with The Defenders this Summer!**

Join The Environmental Defenders this summer as we enjoy what we help to protect. A recent trip on the Nippersink is shown on the cover of this issue of EarthConnect.

On Saturday, July 23, the paddle takes us on the Des Plaines River from Russell Road Launch to Wadsworth Road Launch. Meet at 9AM and should take about 3-4 hours (6.25 miles). Please contact trip leader, Cindy Skruckrud at cskruckrud@gmail.com. [http://www.lcfpd.org/assets/1/7/PRINTABLE--Des_Plaines_River_Trail_Map2.pdf](http://www.lcfpd.org/assets/1/7/PRINTABLE--Des_Plaines_River_Trail_Map2.pdf)

On Saturday, August 20, we’ll explore The Fox River from Sheridan to Ayers Landing in LaSalle County. Trip is 3-6 hours (12 miles or shorter trip of 6 miles). There is an optional camp out available for Saturday night and boats can be rented or bring your own. Fees apply for camping/boat rental/Ayer’s shuttle/self put-in and take-out. Please contact trip leader, Cynthia Kanner, at cynthkanner@gmail.com to learn more and to reserve a spot. This is considered one of the most beautiful paddles in Illinois with limestone bluffs and clear waters. [www.ayerslandingcanaorental.com](http://www.ayerslandingcanaorental.com)

September take us to the Kishwaukee River on Saturday, September 10. Affectionately know at the “Kish,” this is a “Class A” river and truly is breathtaking. Giant softshell turtles can be seen and so can the bottom of the river! Please contact trip leader, Neill Sachs at neillsachs@gmail.com.

For all paddle trips, please pack a lunch. Hope to see you outside on the water!!

**Welcome New Members!**

- Tammy Baier
- Julie Baldwin
- Kim Bateman
- Douglas Becker
- Isabel Bernardi
- Georgianne Chromczak
- Amy & Doug Collins
- Jacklyn & Richard Crosby
- Pat Dahn
- Sean Feely
- John Hanlin
- Jeff & Carol Heisler
- Diana Jarrell
- Chantel Jenrette
- Jeff Koppa
- David Kranz, Dave’s Bait & Tackle
- Laraine Kubik
- Paul & Liz Kubik, & Gavin & Isabella
- Joseph Perilongo
- Steve Schultz
- Eric Seagren
- Cathy & Peter Smith
- Renee Solger
- Sandi Teiken & Gregg Hornyak
- Brothers Junk Removal
- Windridge Memorial Park
Similar efforts are underway in other watersheds in the state to also address localized nutrient-caused problems.

**What citizens can do.** Agricultural groups like farm bureaus are doing a good job helping farmers identify best management practices they can use on their lands to prevent the runoff of nutrients. Nutrients lost from farmers’ fields to Illinois waterways are like farmers’ dollars going down the drain. So campaigns like “Keep it 4rCrop— Right Source, Right Rate, Right Time, and Right Place,” “What’s Your Strategy?” and research and outreach funded by the Nutrient Research and Education Council all aim to keep fertilizers going into farmers’ crops.

**In Your Community** Citizens should support farmers’ efforts. Where they can play the most important role is in supporting improvements in the treatment of wastewater from Illinois’ cities and helping to reduce the runoff of nutrients from the urban environment. Removing phosphorus from wastewater plant effluent often requires treatment plant upgrades. Let your municipal officials know that you are willing to do your part to cover the cost of improving the water quality of effluent being discharged to your local stream or river. In McHenry County, for example, the towns of Cary and Fox River Grove will need to make upgrades by 2019. Citizens should also support community efforts to clean up urban runoff. While urban runoff contributes a small portion of the nitrate and phosphorus that leaves the state, it is often the biggest source of nutrients to streams and lakes within cities. Towns are increasingly making use of green infrastructure, such as wetland basins and rain gardens, to clean up and reduce stormwater runoff. These features have a number of added benefits including providing habitat for wildlife, especially nectar and food plants for butterflies, bees and other pollinators and replenishing groundwater by providing areas where rain and snowmelt can infiltrate into the ground. This is especially important in places like McHenry County, where groundwater is our sole source of drinking water. Open space agencies, like the McHenry County Conservation District and Park Districts, help protect our streams, rivers and lakes from nutrient pollution as they conserve land around these waterways and create native landscape buffers.

**At Home** Residents can help reduce nutrient runoff by capturing home downspouts in rain gardens or rain barrels. Illinois soils typically contain sufficient phosphorus to maintain healthy turf grass so purchase phosphorus-free lawn fertilizer by only buying fertilizer in which the center number is ‘0’. If you hire a lawn care company, check with them to make sure they are complying with Illinois Lawn Care Products Application and Notice Act and are using no-phosphorus lawn fertilizer. Native plantings need neither watering nor fertilizer so are a good way to make your property friendly to your local stream, river or lake. The Land Conservancy’s Conservation@Home program and the Wildflower Preservation and Propagation Committee’s Natural Garden in Your Yard Mentoring Program can provide guidance.

Solving Illinois’ nutrient problem will take a generation. We owe it to future generations to work together to reduce our nutrient inputs to our lakes and rivers as quickly as we can.

**What’s Your Strategy?**

The author, Cindy Skrukrud, also Chairs The Environmental Defenders’ Water and Natural Resources Protection Committee and the Fox River Study Group and serves on the Policy Working Group that guides implementation of the Illinois Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy.

---

**Earth Day in Photos**

Cover article continued from page 3.
Pancake Breakfast

Aquatic Animal Sampling at the Kishwaukee Headwaters, June 4

Four Defenders’ members used dip nets to see what creatures are using the stream at the Defenders Dean Street property. The headwaters are a muck bottom stream with quite a high-quality plant community lining the bank. Sedges, Sweet Indian Plantain, Joe Pye Weed, and others make quite a nice natural area along the stream. A Sedge Wren and an Alder Flycatcher sang as we collected our samples.

In the water we found both Darner and Skimmer Dragonfly larvae, Narrow-winged Damselfly larvae, Fingernail Clams, a Water Threader, a Bull Frog, American Toad Tadpoles, Brook Stickleback and Central Mud Minnow fish. These are typical local species for muck bottom creeks that are not polluted. The two fish are both considered Illinois Wildlife Action Plan Species since they do not do well in degraded environments. It’s good that The Defenders, the Soil and Water Conservation District, the City of Woodstock, and MCCD all collaborated years ago to protect this headwater stream that supports some high quality species!

Solar Tour

A big thank you to Pat and Terry Dieckhoff for providing several interested members information about their use of solar energy this Spring. Not only did they provide a tour of their solar installation, but also shared information about their use of rain barrels, a rain garden and natural landscaping to help them live more sustainably.
Recycling Drives Roam the County

By Barb Day, Chair, Waste Reduction Committee

On Saturday, May 14, 2016 the Environmental Defenders of McHenry County, who has held recycling drives in McHenry County since the early 1970s, held their drive for the first time in Lake in the Hills at the Public Works Department. Thanks to our spectacular volunteers and the assistance received from Lake in the Hills, we were able to collect 11,000 pounds of TVs and monitors in addition to the other items we usually collect: household and auto batteries, fluorescent tubes and bulbs, Styrofoam, all kinds of tapes, CDs and DVDs, and used clothing and tennis shoes. More than 100 cars brought items to be recycled.

We have recycling drives scheduled in different towns throughout McHenry County for the remainder of the year. On June 11 we were in Harvard at the Village Hall. On July 9 we will be in Algonquin at Jacobs High School. We are making arrangements to come to your town in the near future.

We believe that it is a bad idea to throw solid waste materials in a hole in the ground when they could become another product. A landfill has the potential to leak and cause problems for our groundwater, soil and air. Our focus is to reduce consumption, reuse what we can and recycle the rest. Recycled materials are used to create new products. Creating that new product can also create jobs.

During our drives we are often asked a few questions:

1. Why can’t I just throw my TV in the garbage?
   Electronics, including TVs and computer monitors, are full of toxic stuff like lead, admium, mercury, and arsenic which can pollute our water supply. It’s against the law. It’s wrong. It’s irresponsible.

2. Why do we request a donation for certain items we take to recycle?
   We ask for a donation because we are a non-profit and need to cover our costs. The Environmental Defenders pay $3,000-$3,500 per month to get everything hauled to the recyclers, the people who take apart the TVs and monitors we take to them. We have no government funding and the recycling events are run entirely on donations. We could not afford to provide this service otherwise.

3. Would it be cheaper to throw the item in a landfill? Not really.

A landfill has to be maintained by either a private owner or the government in other words, us, the taxpayer. It has to be inspected to check for leaking and other problems, again, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA), meaning us the taxpayer. When an existing landfill is full, other land must be found and acquired. Taxpayers pay for that. According to the IEPA the landfills in our area have about 10 years of life left in them. Does anyone want a landfill near their property? Does anyone want to pay to have solid waste materials hauled far away (another cost to the taxpayer) when a site nearby is not found?

Recycling should and can provide many opportunities, including jobs, which must be better than throwing reusable materials away. After all, the recyclable materials (mostly packaging) have a dollar value through the process of manufacturing the product we consume. We pay that price when we buy the product. It seems it would be better to make another product from that material rather than throw it away, don’t you think?
**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, waste reduction, 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.

Inquire if your work has EarthShare giving program!
Call us at 815-338-0393.

---

**Membership Form**

Choose a level that works for you!

- Supporting – $250
- Patron – $100
- Family/Basic – $50
- Young Professional/Millennial – $30
- Student – $10
- Senior – $25
- LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP: $1,000

Other amount

Total contribution: $________

Name #1
Name #2
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: nwsltrSummer2016
## Events & Activities

### July

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, July 6</td>
<td><strong>“Green Wednesdays” Talk &amp; Reception</strong> — Duke’s Alehouse &amp; Kitchen, Crystal Lake. 5-7 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday, July 9</td>
<td><strong>Recycling Drive-ALGONQUIN</strong> — Jacob’s High School, 2601 Bunker Hill Drive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 14-16</td>
<td><strong>Summer Garage Sale. See page 7 for details.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday, July 23</td>
<td><strong>Des Plaines River Paddle Trip</strong> — 9 AM. Contact Cindy Skrukrud to sign up: <a href="mailto:cskrukrud@gmail.com">cskrukrud@gmail.com</a>. Russell Rd Launch to Wadsworth Rd Launch. 3-4 hours/6.25 miles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### August

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, August 3</td>
<td><strong>“Green Wednesdays” Talk &amp; Reception</strong> — Duke’s Alehouse &amp; Kitchen, Crystal Lake. 5-7 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 3-7</td>
<td><strong>McHenry County Fair</strong> — Defenders’ volunteers needed for this annual fundraiser. Details page 6.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 6</td>
<td><strong>First Annual Keep Woodstock Beautiful</strong> — Cleanup event, 8AM to 1PM. Smaller groups, families and individuals are encouraged to register in advance at Volunteer Spot: <a href="http://vols.pt/SD4dis">http://vols.pt/SD4dis</a>. The morning begins with registration and a continental breakfast at Matrix 4, 610 E. Judd Street. The Woodstock Chamber of Commerce, the City of Woodstock, The Environmental Defenders and the Woodstock Jaycees, along with community residents, will organize this free, family friendly event every August, promoting a clean community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 11 &amp; 12</td>
<td><strong>Tour of Gladstone Fen</strong>— 6 PM both dates. RSVPs needed. Details page 7.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday, August 20</td>
<td><strong>Fox River Paddle Trip</strong> — 10 AM. Contact Cynthia Kanner to sign up: <a href="mailto:cynthkanner@gmail.com">cynthkanner@gmail.com</a>. Sheridan to Ayers Landing, in LaSalle County. 3-6 hours/12 miles. Details page 7.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat. August 20 evening</td>
<td><strong>Annual Corn Roast</strong> — 4 PM. Details page 7.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### September

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, Sept. 7</td>
<td><strong>“Green Wednesdays” Talk &amp; Reception</strong> – Duke’s Alehouse &amp; Kitchen, Crystal Lake. 5-7 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday, Sept. 10</td>
<td><strong>Kishwaukee River Paddle Trip</strong> — 9 AM: Contact Neill Sachs - <a href="mailto:neillsachs@gmail.com">neillsachs@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday, Sept. 17</td>
<td><strong>It’s Our River - 9th annual Celebration of The Fox!</strong> — 1 PM to 4 PM. Cornish Park, Algonquin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

Non Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 43
Woodstock, IL
60098

Change Service Requested