

EARTHCONNECT



Quarterly Newsletter of the
Environmental Defenders of McHenry County

STYROFOAM RECYCLING VOLUNTEERS HARD AT WORK

BY BARB DAY, CHAIR OF RECYCLING TEAM

Recently, I've had the opportunity to help organize the Styrofoam recycling program and the volunteers who keep it running. The Defenders has three sheds in McHenry County where the public can drop off hard, clean Styrofoam: Algonquin Township Road District, 3702 Northwest Highway, Crystal Lake; Woodstock Public Works Administration facility, 326 Washington Street; and Algonquin Public Works facility, 110 Meyer Drive, Algonquin.

The time and effort our volunteers provide is amazing. We have two groups, although many of our "helpers" work in both groups. One, known as the "sorters/baggers," goes to the sheds and sorts the material, which means separating the "clean" Styrofoam that can be recycled and sold, from the stuff that is not clean, or not the hard, white (or colored) Styrofoam and cannot be recycled and sold. The "clean" stuff gets put in huge plastic bags. (See what we accept below and what we don't accept on the next page.)

The other group is our drivers. One day each week these volunteers go to the U-Haul in either Crystal Lake or Woodstock, and rent a 26-foot truck. From there, they visit each of our three shed sites, pick up the filled bags and transport them to Chicago Logistic Service, the trucking company owned by our board member, Ken Santowski. Ken has a densifier, and one of our volunteers, Gary Johnson (see below) and one of Ken's employees push the Styrofoam into the densifier, which turns the Styrofoam into 4-ft.-long logs. Those logs are then available for sale (see on next page).



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STYROFOAM RECYCLING CONT.

So far this year, our sorters/baggers have provided 591 hours and filled 833 bags. Our drivers have logged 262 hours, often having to make the cycle more than once, because the truck gets too full for one cycle to take care of all the bags. Volunteers are always needed. Hope you will come and join us in all this fun. Contact me at barbjday1934@gmail.com to volunteer.



AN UPDATE FROM YOUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ERIN KENNEDY

Hello Defenders, I'm excited to have crossed the three month mark with the organization in September. I have been consistently amazed and impressed with your dedication and commitment to improving the environmental health of McHenry County. I can't thank you enough for the warm and helpful welcome I received. During my short time as your executive director, I have spoken at a zoning board and county board meeting advocating for solar in McHenry County, worked at the county fair, applied for a grant to help support the work of our action teams, met with many community leaders, tabled at the Mexican Independence Day event in Woodstock, attended a BMP event and answered dozens of emails and phone calls addressing residents' environmental questions and concerns. Your efforts motivate me daily to continue the history of amazing environmental work done to benefit all residents of McHenry County. My goal as your executive director is to meet that same standard while setting up the organization for future success. When dealing with environmental issues the more people involved, the better you set yourself up for a successful outcome. I've been so excited to hear about all the different events our action teams are planning as ways to get more people involved with the Defenders. Being a resource for environmental knowledge and creating educational opportunities for the residents of McHenry County will be important to our continued success. If you aren't already, please consider getting involved with one of our six Action Teams, or help spread the word about all the important work they are doing to benefit our community. Our website, social media and weekly E-News are great ways to stay up-to-date on the work of our Action Teams and upcoming events to participate in. I look forward to meeting even more of you and working alongside you to continue our necessary and important work for all residents of the county.

Another lovely Corn Roast in the books!

On Saturday, August 19, Defenders' members gathered to spend time together at our Annual Members' Corn Roast. The weather was perfect and the company was amazing. Rico and Scott roasted delicious corn, and members brought dishes to share. We had members of all ages at the Roast this year, with the kids enjoying giant bubbles and feeding the chickens. Our new Director Erin Kennedy was there and met many Defenders and provided an update on the organization. We are so lucky to be hosted every year by the Howenstines at Pioneer Tree Farm, and appreciate the entire family and our volunteers endlessly.



“FALL” INTO OUR BOOKSTORES

BY PAM JOHNSON & DIANE GREENMAN, MANAGER & ASST. MANAGER

Happy fall, y'all! The last few months of 2023 are definitely going to be busy ones for the green bookstores. Fun fall events lead up to the hectic, but happy, holiday season.

The Big Fall Book Sale in September and October is a wonderful source of “new” books to add to both stores’ inventories. Many of our bookstore volunteers also help out at the sale. Depending on how many books are left at the end of the sale, there will likely be a hallway sale at The Green Spot in mid-October.

The Green Read is hoping to win another award in the scarecrow decorating contest as part of the Downtown Crystal Lake Johnny Appleseed Festival at the end of September. So far we’re 3 for 3 (see photo of our 2022 award-winning scarecrow)! The Halloween Handout is another Downtown Crystal Lake event The Green Read will participate in again this year. It’s fun to see so many kids dressed up in their costumes!



November is jam-packed with events and celebrations. To start off the month, the bookstores will have a booth at the Green Living Expo. Stop by and say hi when you’re at the Expo! We’ll have a variety of books, puzzles, and stationery items for sale that day. November also marks a huge milestone for The Green Read - it will be 5 years old that month! A celebration is being planned; stay tuned to the eNews or bookstore newsletters for details.

Thanksgiving weekend is our biggest sales weekend of the year for both stores. Black Friday followed by Small Business Saturday are historically our busiest days of the year. We spend a tremendous amount of time preparing the stores for the holiday season, from choosing new merchandise to putting up decorations. Something new to look for this year are boxed Christmas cards and Advent cards, which will be available by Thanksgiving weekend. Please consider the Green stores for your holiday purchases this year. Who doesn’t love to receive a book or puzzle hand-chosen with love? Gift certificates are another popular option.

As we give thanks on November 23rd, we will remember all of the volunteers who are instrumental in keeping the stores open, inviting and organized. We are thankful for everything they do, and they are all very much appreciated!

Follow our bookstores’ Facebook pages to keep up-to-date on what’s happening at the stores. Links can be found to both stores on the Defenders’ website at <https://mcdef.org/bookstores/>. Our monthly newsletter is another great way to learn about our sales and events. Sign up to receive it at either of our stores or email thegreenreadbookstore@gmail.com and request to be added to the newsletter subscriber list. We hope you can “fall” into our bookstores and “leaf” with a good book to help support the Environmental Defenders this autumn!

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES TALKS & TOURS

By Nancy Schietzelt, Volunteer

2023 marked the second year for the Water and Natural Resources Protection Action Team to hold six BMP Talks and Tours in collaboration with the McHenry County Planning and Development Department’s Water Resources Division. Municipalities, schools, churches, libraries, townships and the County are invited to these events, as well as McHenry County residents. They provide an opportunity to learn about state-of-the-art practices that can be implemented to protect and maintain the integrity of natural resources and promote conservation of land, water and energy. Topics range from planting a pollinator garden, to reducing light pollution at night, to caring for trees and utilizing green infrastructure to mitigate flooding. If you missed past events, but would like to learn about these BMPs, you can go to <https://tinyurl.com/FridayBMPTours>. There, you’ll be able to click on the links to watch the videos of the presentations. We hope you enjoy them and learn something! And if you pick up some good ideas, you can share them with your municipality, township, etc. and urge them to implement them!



GRATEFUL FOR GRANTS

BY CECILIA CARMAN, CO-CHAIR OF WASTE REDUCTION TEAM

The Waste Reduction Team has worked diligently in the past year to find grants to help fund our projects, and we obtained three. Our first was given to us by EcoProducts. EcoProducts has been a great partner and support for the team- first, as keynote speaker for our Sustainability Summit and now with monetary donation. We couldn't have started our Race to Reduce Waste Initiative without them. They provided us funds to provide composting for restaurants at a reduced cost and consulted with restaurants on compostable packaging alternatives. If you meet Jamie or anyone else from Eco Products please thank them for their continuous support!

We are so happy to have funding for our main initiative, but the team has other goals. We want to start a community fridge program. This program would rescue food from going to the landfill and make it available to the under-resourced in our county. We have seen successful programs in Evanston and Chicago and plan to bring it to McHenry County. This project needed funding and we found it through Lake in the Hills' Rotary. They honored us with the Major Difference Maker Grant. This grant will cover the cost and upkeep of the fridges. We have two organizations interested in hosting a fridge and cannot wait to help the environment and community with one fell swoop.

Our good fortune hasn't stopped. I applied for a volunteer grant my employer offers. I work for a large corporation and thought it was a long shot, but I was wrong. CVS has given our team a \$1,000 grant to be used for any project! The team is brainstorming to find the best use of these funds. As rookie grant writers, our team is making great strides. We hope we can keep this momentum and help the environment and community for years to come.

Annual Christmas Tree Fundraiser Seeking Volunteers

By Anne Basten, Chair of Fundraising Team

Cut-your-own Christmas trees will again be available this winter at the Pioneer Tree Farm just north of McHenry. Long-time founding Defenders' members, William and Alice Howenstine and their family, invite you to choose your tree for two weekends in 2023. Starting November 24th, 25th and 26th then opening again on December 2nd and 3rd. Candle dipping, woodworking and other activities are also available around the campfires. Come spend several hours getting into the winter spirit!

This is also a large fundraiser for the Defenders as we provide a large portion of the help on sale days and all the baked goods for the warming house to be sold to the visitors. If you would like to be contacted about working as a volunteer at the farm (inside or outside) or baking for this event, please contact Anne Basten at basten1@sbcglobal.net to be added to our call list or to answer any questions. We would love to get some new people involved in addition to our faithful volunteers. If you worked last year, we have your name and number. Please, do not call the Howenstines directly to volunteer as the Fundraising Team has taken over this task and is handling the scheduling while working with the family.

Welcome New Defenders' Members!



- Lee Snyder- Crystal Lake
- Sai Sivakumar- Lake in the Hills
- Fulfilled Thrift- Woodstock
- Stephanie Tesmer- McHenry
- Cynthia Schnaitman- McHenry
- Jennifer Sebelik- Algonquin
- Amy Daman- Crystal Lake
- David Bart- Algonquin
- Moss & Marrow Tattoo- Crystal Lake
- Braden Thompson- Crystal Lake
- Kishwaukee Brewing Co.- Woodstock
- Marie Evans- Park Ridge
- Linda Simko- Woodstock
- Sheelagh Cooke- Trout Valley
- Susan Clough- Crystal Lake
- Alex Novak- Village of Lakewood
- Frank & Elizabeth Novak- Village of Lakewood
- Chris Hansen- Marengo
- Jan Kayser- Harvard
- Jill Munger- Village of Lakewood
- Izzy Gregory- Crystal Lake
- Michelle Beutlich- Crystal Lake
- Erin & Kevin Donlan- McHenry



MCHENRY COUNTY COMMUNITIES CONTINUE MAYORS MONARCH PLEDGE

By Cindy Skrukud,
Chair of Water & Natural Resources Protection Team

For a number of years now, Water & Natural Resources Protection (WNRP) Action Team volunteers have been encouraging McHenry County entities to annually sign the Mayors' Monarch Pledge (MMP). In 2022, thirteen towns and a park district signed the pledge. This year, twelve towns, Crystal Lake Park District and Nunda Township all signed. Signers from McHenry County represent 25% of all those participating from Illinois. What a way to show up for our state's insect, McHenry County! The pledge period for 2024 runs from December 1, 2023 through March 31, 2024. Once again, Defenders volunteers will be urging previous signers to re-pledge and contacting other towns to join in too. If your town (or park district or school district) is missing from this list and you'd like to help encourage them to sign, reach out to WNRP Team chair Cindy Skrukud at cskrukud@gmail.com to join our Mayors Monarch Pledge Committee. Read more about the MMP at nwf.org/MayorsMonarchPledge.



*Thank You
to these signers of
the 2023 Mayors
Monarch Pledge!*

- Algonquin
- Bull Valley
- Crystal Lake
- Crystal Lake Park District
- Harvard

- Hebron
- Holiday Hills
- Huntley
- Johnsburg
- Lake in the Hills
- Marengo
- Nunda Township
- Union
- Woodstock

Through the National Wildlife Federation's Mayors' Monarch Pledge, U.S. cities, municipalities, and other community entities are committing to create habitat for the monarch butterfly and pollinators, and to educate residents about how they can make a difference at home and in their community.



GARY THRALL'S LOADED KAYAK WITH 2 CHAINSAWS, GAS & MANY TOOLS TO HELP CLEAR THE KISH



GARY THRALL USING HIS TRACTOR TO HELP SPREAD CHIPS AT WOODBINE

PADDLE THE KISH UPDATE

BY PAT LAWLOR, DIRECTOR OF PADDLE THE KISH

Paddle the Kish in Marengo had a great season clearing the river this year. Many volunteers helped on the chainsaw tree-clearing days. Starting on March 30, we had seven Woodbine chipping days, and twelve river clearing days. These were all very strenuous, sometimes lasting seven hours. Volunteers bring their own equipment, gas, tools and kayak. All the kayakers, tubers and fishermen who use the Kishwaukee River for recreation owe a debt of gratitude to the dozens of volunteers who helped this year, as well as the hundreds who volunteered the past four years.

Starting at Siems Memorial Park in Union, the Kish should be cleared for paddling all the way to County Line Rd and beyond. There is a tree or two around Ritz Rd, west of Hwy 23. Sadly, the river levels have been very low during this drought year of 2023, so the volunteers have not been able to have that last push. On October 1, the hunting season starts, so there is no river access for the rest of the fall and winter. Enjoy the lovely woodsy walk at Woodbine down to the river during those months, as many people do. The address is 860 Woodbine Lane in Marengo.

Happy paddling dreams over the winter and see you next spring to finish the job!

2023 Intern Reports

Mills Guanci, Water and Natural Resource Protection Team

I worked as a Defenders' Water and Natural Resources Protection Action Team intern this summer. My fellow intern, Gena, and I worked with Nancy Schietzelt and Cindy Skrukud. Our responsibilities ranged from restoration workdays to data collection to memorizing the names of butterflies. I loved how engaging our work was and that we were trusted with responsibilities such as identifying species for official lists and submitting data. We did many interesting activities this summer, but I especially enjoyed working with the kids from the Youth and Family Center of McHenry County to upkeep two community pollinator gardens. The kids were all interested and excited to work, and the gardens looked great at the end of the day. I was proud that I could lead and teach children and somewhat shocked that I had so much fun doing it. Another takeaway that I gained from this internship is an aspiration to learn as much as I can about the ecosystems that surround me. Learning the names of each plant and bug has taught me a new appreciation for the individuals that make up a prairie, and I feel a stronger sense of connection with both the Earth and the people around me.



**GENA & MILLS WORK TO ERADICATE
INVASIVE SPECIES**

Gena Denkov, Water and Natural Resource Protection Team

My summer was an eventful one as an Environmental Defenders' Water and Natural Resources Protection Action Team intern. I worked primarily alongside my fellow intern Mills Guanci and my wonderful mentors Cindy Skrukud and Nancy Schietzelt. We went on many adventures to sites within and around McHenry County. My favorites being Boloria Meadows, the County Administration building and the several sites in Bull Valley where we collected water samples. At Boloria Meadows, we were led by Pete Jackson and Dennis Dreher, the site steward who had been maintaining his beautiful restored prairie for years now. Dennis explained the history of the site and the progress of his restoration throughout the years. At the site, we identified at least ten species of butterflies including my favorite, the Monarch. Later in the week we were then tasked to give pollinator tours at the same site to attendees of the Pollinator Talk and Trek. I was eager to tell and show individuals about the butterflies and the pollinator plants that they rely on. I was so excited to hear of attendees who are avid gardeners and planters of the milkweed plant. We also collected seep water samples from sites in the county. It was an amazing opportunity to be a part of a twenty-year-long study and analyze the health of McHenry County's seeps. At the County Administration building we were tasked with preparing the soil and the planting of natives on parking lot islands. It was tough work at first, as it was only Scott Kuykendall, Mills, and I loosening the hard, dry soil, but on planting day our efforts were proven worthy as so many volunteers gathered to plant hundreds of plants in just a few hours! I think everyone there could agree that it was so rewarding. Not only did I learn so much this summer, but I hope that I shared some of my knowledge at the several outreach events we either hosted or visited. I had an amazing summer with the Defenders. Thank you to everyone who helped me along the way.

Emma Kropke, Waste Reduction Team

This past summer I worked under the Waste Reduction Action Team with co-chairs Cecilia Carman and Michelle Muryn. One of our main focuses was establishing a location for a community fridge in McHenry County. Food waste is a significant issue, and the community fridge would serve as a way to mitigate waste while helping provide food for those in need. I contributed with outreach and connecting us with local contacts who helped us move forward with the project. We secured a grant for the project, and received location permission from the Youth & Family Center of McHenry County. Additionally, we found a place for a new compost bin at one of the pollinator gardens in McHenry County. I also researched the effects of plastic and Styrofoam on the environment and human health, which I presented at the McHenry County Fair. Not to mention, the Environmental Defender's signage we posted around the fairgrounds as a way to encourage people to reduce their own waste. I really enjoyed my time with the Defenders and it gave a unique insight into local environmental policy. I connected with representatives from Evanston, Lake County, the Crystal Lake Wastewater Treatment Plant, and the Illinois state representative for International Compost Awareness Week. Thanks to Cecilia and Michelle, I had the privilege to learn from these amazing people, and I cannot thank them enough!



2023 Intern Reports cont.

Jon Cian Gross, Waste Reduction Team

During my summer internship with the Defenders' Waste Reduction Action Team, I worked on multiple projects that gave me real-world experience in sustainability. My main interest was in microplastic concentrations in McHenry County's rivers. I took samples from the Kishwaukee and Nippersink Rivers (left), which are on their way to UIUC to be analyzed as a follow-up to a study done in 2020 which studied the effect of water treatment on microplastics in rivers. These efforts will hopefully bring awareness and insight to local plastic pollution. In addition to this, I worked to set up a thrifting and textile recycling event with Home of the Sparrow in Woodstock. While I was not able to complete this before leaving for college, I hopefully secured the event for the Defenders in the future. In addition, I helped develop posters and marketing for a more sustainable McHenry County Fair and develop plans for a future single-use plastic ban. I am more than grateful for the chance to develop my interests in sustainability and meet so many great people.

UPDATE FROM MCHENRY COUNTY SCHOOLS ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAM (MCSEEP)

BY PAM KING, DIRECTOR OF MCSEEP

We here at the McHenry County Schools Environmental Education Program (MCSEEP) spent a summer recharging for the new school year. Last year we were invited into twenty-nine schools across McHenry County and reached almost 10,000 students. Now is the time we begin to set our goals for the next year. This coming year we want to be in forty different schools, hold both the Spring and the Fall Groundwater Festival, update our 7th grade curriculum and finally develop a video log of "green" occupations that have a McHenry County connection.

This summer, I arranged our office space into two distinct areas, our office and storage area and a conference room. The MCSEEP conference room is ready for use by all Defenders' teams and associated organizations. If you're interested in using the conference space, please let me know and I will get you on our schedule. I will be painting this fall to spruce up the area further.

In addition, I received some materials from Pat Dieckhoff, the first director of MCSEEP - although at the time, the organization was called the McHenry County Schools Recycling Education Program. Over the years, the program has expanded to include more aspects of environmental education. The program began with eight schools in 1987.

Over the summer we met several times with schools that have all-year Pre-K classes. We also provided games for the County Fair and the Monarch Festival in Crystal Lake. Would you like to support MCSEEP presentations in schools? We have a few schools and programs that cannot afford their share of the program. If you are interested in supporting environmental education throughout McHenry County, please contact me. Pamela Duncan King at mcseepdirector@gmail.com. And please follow us on Facebook! <https://www.facebook.com/MCSEEP>



PRE-K STUDENTS INVESTIGATING DENSITY.



Recycling award
 Pat Dieckhoff (center) accepts a special Theta Award from the McHenry County Defenders. Jerry Paulsen, executive director, (right) made the presentation to recognize her work in starting a recycling education program at eight schools. With them are Dick McDowell, McHenry County regional school superintendent.

NEWSPAPER CLIPPING SHOWING PAT DIECKHOFF, MCSEEP FOUNDER WITH JERRY PAULSEN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENDERS AND DICK MCDOWELL, MCHENRY COUNTY REGIONAL SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT.

PADDLING THE NEW NATIONAL RECREATION TRAIL – THE FOX RIVER

On a beautiful Saturday morning, August 12th, nineteen of us took to the Fox River for the annual Fox River Paddle with a 10AM departure from Cornish Park, Algonquin. The nine-mile stretch to Voyageur Landing in Elgin is an all-day event with time to learn about the river and its natural and human history along the way. While we had hoped that the Carpentersville dam would have been removed by now, that wasn't the case, so a long single-line of boats emerged one-by-one from the river at portage. Perhaps THIS will be the last time we'll need to drag our boats up and over. But, this is always a great place to feature a speaker, with last year's being Gary Swick, President of Friends of the Fox River. This year we were very fortunate to have another very special Fox River advocate.



Our group was joined by Karen Ann Miller, Executive Planner with the Kane County Development Department and Illinois Co-Chair of the Fabulous Fox! Water Trail. If this name sounds familiar to the reader, it should! Karen has been spearheading the effort for the Fox to become a National Water Trail for many years, along with partner organizations and volunteer advocates. She has addressed many groups in the past and was a featured speaker at It's Our River Day in Algonquin several years ago, as well as a panelist at the most recent Fox River Summit. It was a celebratory moment when Karen talked about the June 3rd, 2023 designation of the Fox River as a National Recreation Trail by the United States Department of the Interior! With maps in hand for everyone, she shared how this came to be and the plans ahead that will support and revive not only the river, but the river towns along the trail. This designation puts the Fox on the map within the National Park Service. More information is here: <https://fabulousfoxwatertrail.org/> and maps here: <https://fabulousfoxwatertrail.org/printable-maps/>. This year, our group was followed briefly by a drone, part of the gathering of new marketing material for the Fabulous Fox! Water Trail. Last year we were a small part of what was many hours of footage taken for a documentary, which included the Fox in "Rivers are Life": <https://riversarelife.com/hero-overview-watershed-warriors/>. I wonder what fame next year will bring!

With a short paddle after portage to lunch, we again disembarked, and this time scrambled up the riverbank for a long lunch at Rosie O'Hares in East Dundee. With outdoor seating located right across River Road from the Fox, it's a perfect spot to relax, have some good food and support local. With still a few miles to paddle after lunch, the group - full and happy - completed the journey at 5PM.



CARPENTERSVILLE DAMN PORTAGE

For the past few years, we've been working with Paddle On! Outfitters to bring this opportunity to float the Fox to those who may not have a boat, and to assist with the sometimes-complicated work of shuttling boats and people between take-out and put-in. With rental and shuttle included, or just the shuttle if paddlers have their own crafts, it's a great way to organize things, especially with a big group. A big thank you to the Village of Algonquin for supporting the mobile outfitter model with put-in at Cornish Park and to Matthew Capes, owner of Paddle On! You can look them up here for other paddle opportunities around the region: <https://www.paddleonoutfitters.com/>. Paddle On! Outfitters, Inc. not only runs the shuttle, but they create the event through their Facebook page, which has helped enormously in increasing the number of paddlers on this annual trip. It was great to see a couple of members of the Environmental Defenders' Water and Natural Resources Protection Action Team join in, one of whom was kayaking for the very first time! Great job! 'Til next time, happy paddling!

-Your volunteer Fox River guide, Cynthia Kanner



Defenders at the McHenry County Fair

Location, location, location! What a great location we had in Building C at the County Fair this year, which allowed us to interact with more people than we ever have. Pat Lawlor and Nancy Schietzelt coordinated arrangements with the Defenders, Friends of Hackmatack, MCSEEP, Citizens' Climate Lobby and the Water Resources Division of the County Planning and Development Department to create a walk-through, interactive display. This allowed our volunteers to share information about all the organizations and their work to protect our watersheds, pollinators, natural areas, etc. Our monarchs were the stars of the show, drawing in children and adults. And many t-shirts were made into reusable bags by fairgoers both young and old. Thanks so much to all of our volunteers that made it possible to share so much environmental protection information with so many people!

MAKE A DIFFERENCE DAY 2023

Make a Difference Day is celebrated annually in October. If you've ever wondered if your actions can make a difference, the answer is "Yes"! We have taken part in this day of service for many years by organizing volunteers to help remove invasive species and collect trash at one of the prairies that we manage to improve habitat for native plant and animal species.

On Saturday, October 28, you are invited to "make a difference" by helping with restoration efforts at Triangle Prairie on the corner of Hwy 14 and Lake Avenue in Woodstock as part of the national "Make A Difference Day" celebration. In addition to cutting resprouts from our workdays last winter, we'll also be collecting trash throughout the site. And if weather conditions permit, we'll burn some piles of branches left over from our past workdays. The event will begin at 9 a.m. and conclude at 11a.m.

Volunteers are asked to wear work clothes, gloves, and boots. Please park in the southwest corner of the Walmart parking lot and walk down to the prairie. All necessary equipment and snacks will be provided. Please bring your own water. If you have any questions about this event, please contact Nancy Schietzelt at buroak92@gmail.com or call the office at 815-338-0393. Come help us make a positive difference in our environment and enjoy some time outdoors!

C de C Update

BY DESTINY SEATON, COMMUNICATION AND MEMBERSHIP SPECIALIST

Conversación de Conservación had a strong start to its year of programming, including our 3rd annual Pollinator Garden Planting in partnership with Small Waters Education and the Youth and Family Center of McHenry County. Kids and interns enjoyed maintaining the gardens they planted in previous summers, fostering their connection with nature.

On August 6, we held our 3rd annual Latino Conservation Week Picnic at Pleasant Valley Conservation Area. While the turnout was not as large as last year, the day was filled with free tacos from El Taco Feliz, captivating music by Grupo Enigmez and abundant natural beauty. This year, C de C has been focused on learning and listening to the community to provide valuable and consistent programming. Surveys conducted at the picnic revealed that many attendees had not visited Pleasant Valley before.

Continuing our outreach efforts, we engaged with families at the Woodstock Mexican Independence Day celebration, gaining valuable contacts and collecting surveys about their interests in environmental activities. Here's to another year of C de C's outreach, connections and engaging programming!





Citizens' Climate Lobby

Citizens' Climate Lobby empowers everyday people to work together on climate policy. Our supporters are organized in 420+ chapters across the United States, building support in Congress for a national, bipartisan solution to climate change. Globally, we also support 150+ international chapters on six continents.

Increase your climate advocacy with this quick, easy and valuable action: call or email your members of Congress (MOC) monthly with a message that supports CCL's policy agenda. Use this link to receive text reminders (about monthly) that connect you with your MOC and provide you with a suggested script strategically-timed to climate action in Congress: <https://citizensclimatelobby.org/text-alerts/>. Want to do more? Sign up for the new CCL Endorsement Form at <http://www.cclusa.org/endorse>. Submit your name and your organization's name to be included in the list of elected officials, business, faith and community leaders who support one or more of these climate solutions. More information at <https://citizensclimatelobby.org/>. Become part of the solution!

Congress passed the Inflation Reduction Act! You called, emailed, wrote letters and Tweeted for months. And Congress PASSED THE BILL. Now the Inflation Reduction Act, which includes the biggest climate provisions in US History, will become law. Thank your Senators for their support! See the Citizens Utility Board Updated Guide to the Inflation Reduction Act (August 2023) here: <https://www.citizensutilityboard.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/2022-IRA-Guide.pdf>.

Trees help people feel better. Citizens Climate Lobby actively supports urban forestry and tree canopy building efforts. Trees lower air temperatures and humidity, and they can influence wind speed. Evaporation of water from trees, or transpiration, has a cooling effect – trees have been shown to reduce asphalt temperatures by 35 degrees Fahrenheit. Trees also improve air and water quality, reduce flooding and erosion, and create habitat for plants and animals. We need to plant trees where needed, ensure diversity of trees and protect the mature tree canopies in place. The McHenry County CCL Chapter has a Tree Initiative Task Force and is actively recruiting new members – please consider joining us!

One of CCL's recent calls to action has been to tell Congress to pass the PROVE IT Act. It's a bipartisan bill introduced in the Senate that would take the first step toward establishing a U.S. carbon border adjustment mechanism, or CBAM. A CBAM would level the playing field by calculating the carbon intensity of certain domestic and foreign products, and then imposing a carbon fee on the extra carbon footprint of products imported into the U.S. The CBAM could also refund domestic products for their lower carbon footprint when they're exported across our border, so they can better compete in other countries' markets.

The IL McHenry County CCL Chapter meetings are held the 1st Thursday of the month from 6:30 to 7:30. Email tpdieckhoff@ameritech.net for more information and directions to the meeting. Meetings will be hybrid (in person at Ridgefield Crystal Lake Presbyterian Church, 8505 Church St, Ridgefield and via Zoom). Our Facebook page has important updates and information specifically for McHenry County: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/276199626119190/>. Can't wait to see you at the meeting! Email tpdieckhoff@ameritech.net for more information.

**DON'T
FORGET**

It's time to be thinking about required minimum distributions and qualified charitable donations. Remember, the Environmental Defenders of McHenry County are a qualified charitable foundation, and the donated amount will be excluded from your taxable income. Consult with your tax advisor or retirement fund administrator to see if this option is right for you.

The Defenders wouldn't exist without your support. Thank you to all of our generous donors, members and volunteers!

Looking for the perfect gift for the holidays?



A Defenders' membership makes a wonderful gift to a loved one who cares about their environment and community and prefers to keep it low waste for the holidays!

Purchase them a membership at mcdef.org/become-a-member/ or come into the office or one of our bookstores to purchase a gift certificate.

JOIN US FOR THE 15TH ANNUAL GREEN LIVING EXPO

**NOVEMBER 4, 2023, 10AM-3PM
FREE ADMISSION!**



Join us for the 15th annual Green Living Expo, Northern Illinois' premier sustainability event! Hosted at McHenry County College, this vibrant gathering features vendors and exhibitors from McHenry, Kane, Lake counties, and beyond, offering sustainable solutions for home and work. Discover solar options with state discounts, find eco-friendly holiday gifts like soaps, jewelry, books and mushroom growing kits, explore new hiking and biking trails and stay updated on electric vehicle charging stations. Don't miss the Student Research Forum, where local college and university students showcase fascinating sustainability projects. Enjoy a delicious and eco-conscious meal with compostable serving items. Plus, the McHenry County Department of Health offers pumpkin composting and free on-site paper shredding. Vendor spots are limited, so contact sustainability@mchenry.edu to reserve yours, or visit www.mchenry.edu/greenexpo for more details.

DEFENDERS' STAFF

Erin Kennedy, Executive Director

Destiny Seaton, Communication & Membership Specialist

Pam Johnson, Manager, The Green Read and The Green Spot

Diane Greenman, Assistant Manager, The Green Read and The Green Spot

Ingrid Butauskas, Bookkeeper

DEFENDERS' OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

Kim Hankins, President

Jessica Beverly, 1st Vice President

Carl Edstrom, Treasurer

Bev Dow, Secretary

Zak Dolezal

Rico Rotta

Ken Santowski

Ashley Lange



Environmental Defenders' Annual Membership Dinner Meeting

**SUNDAY, MARCH 3, 2024
4PM - 7PM**

ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENDERS' ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DINNER MEETING & SILENT AUCTION – AWARDS AND SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER!

**LOCATION: TBA
DINNER TICKETS \$50 PER MEMBER AND \$60 FOR NON-MEMBER GUESTS.**

TABLE PURCHASING INFORMATION AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST TO DEFENDERSDIRECTOR@GMAIL.COM

ABOUT EARTHCONNECT NEWSLETTER

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110 S. Johnson St, Suite 106
Woodstock, IL 60098
The Woodstock Square Mall
815-338-0393
www.mcdef.org

CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2023

October

1st- 7th | Big Fall Book Sale

10am- 4pm

Algonquin Township Road District Building B
Garage, Crystal Lake

14th | Recycling Drive

9am- noon

McHenry County Administration Building,
Woodstock

22nd | Young Advocates Applesauce Canning

11am- 2pm

Lost Valley Visitor Center, Glacial Park

28th | Make a Difference Day

9am-11am

Triangle Prairie, Woodstock

November

4th | Green Living Expo

10am- 3pm

McHenry County College

26th- Dec 4 | Christmas Tree Sale

Saturday & Sundays 9am- 4pm

Pioneer Tree Farm

December

TBD | Clothing Swap

TBD

Fulfilled Thrift, Woodstock Square Mall

Recurring Events

FIRST WED OF EVERY MONTH |

Green Drinks

Co-sponsored by The Environmental
Defenders & Duke's Alehouse &
Kitchen

5-7pm in-person at Duke's

6:00 - 7:00pm Virtually on Zoom

(Registration required for Zoom)

FOURTH SUN OF EVERY MONTH |

Sterne's Fen Restoration Work Day

9:00 - 11:00am

5617 Hillside Dr, Crystal Lake

Environmental Defenders of

McHenry County

110 S. Johnson Street, Suite 106

Woodstock, IL 60098

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Open Saturday from 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Closed Sunday

110 S. Johnson Street, Woodstock, IL

The
green read
Gently used books &
sustainable gifts

Open Monday - Saturday from 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Closed Sunday

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Illinois

One of the easiest ways to donate to The Environmental Defenders is by contributing to EarthShare in your workplace charity campaign. Talk with your employer or contact the Environmental Defenders at 815-338-0393.

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