

EARTHCONNECT



Quarterly Newsletter of the Environmental Defenders
of McHenry County

WHAT WOULD ALICE DO?

BY DESTINY SEATON, COMMUNICATION & MEMBERSHIP SPECIALIST

When I spoke to Dwight Dalton, former Defenders' Board of Directors President, about Alice Howenstine, the first thing he told me was he often thinks to himself "What would Alice do?"

"There are times when I'm walking down the street and I see a bottle lying on the ground and have to pick it up because I think Alice would give me hell if I don't pick it up," Dwight told me.

When interviewing key members of the Defenders about their relationships with Alice, this was a common theme. Alice served the Environmental Defenders of McHenry County, and the county as a whole, by leading by example.

Anne Basten, another former Defenders' president, said that Alice taught many members how to reduce waste and live a simpler life in the 80's and 90's - a trait Barb Day, current chair of the Defenders' Recycling Action Team, says is something folks of the Quaker faith live by: living simple lives filled with community service. Alice embodied this.

Anne spoke about how Alice showed many Defenders' members how to thrift at resale shops, buy products with less packaging and of course how to recycle. "I don't know if Alice ever bought anything new. She would tear apart sweaters with holes in them and reknit them into other things," Anne admiringly told me.

I have seen Alice and Bill Howenstine lovingly referred to as the matriarch and patriarch of the environmental movement in McHenry County many times by many people in my two and a half years with the Defenders, and after speaking with several members about Alice, I now see why.

Several assert that Alice was their mentor when it came to recycling and environmentalism. Pat Dieckhoff, founder of the McHenry County Schools Recycling Education Program that would eventually become the McHenry County Schools Environmental Education Program (MCSEEP) said Alice was instrumental in getting the program started. (Cont.)



In this issue:

Remembering Alice Howenstine

PAGES 01 - 02

Annual Dinner & Meeting
Announcements

PAGES 03 & 04

News from the Bookstores

PAGE 05

Clean Energy Incentive Sessions

PAGE 07

Sensible Salting at Home

PAGES 08 - 09

Scholarship Applications

PAGE 10

MCSEEP Update

PAGE 11

And more...

WHAT WOULD ALICE DO? CONT.

Alice and Pat served on the county Solid Waste Committee together where they discussed how to address solid waste issues. It was decided that children needed to be taught about waste reduction and recycling. Pat, who was working as the associate director of the Defenders at the time but had previously been a teacher, decided it was a job she was up to. She said Alice was the only person within her recycling sphere in the state she knew of who was teaching about recycling, so they put their heads together and developed lesson plans.

Alice was also instrumental in getting municipalities to implement curbside recycling. As Barb said, Alice was everywhere. She always showed up at county board meetings and was terrific at convincing people of the critical nature of recycling without being pushy about it. She believed in the importance of meeting people where they are, and that everyone wanted to do the right thing by recycling. "Alice was a visionary and was driven to have a better world through recycling and reducing waste, and inspired others because of that," Pat told me.



Kim Hankins, current Defenders' Board president and Director of Sustainability at McHenry County College, also credits the creation of the annual McHenry County Recycling Green Guide to Alice's work and dedication to all things recycling and waste reduction. "When I first came to the county 20 years ago, Alice quickly put me to work with a variety of Defenders' recycling initiatives," said Kim. "I learned so much from Alice about recycling and waste reduction that I use in my personal and professional life every day."

Alice was a consistent and reliable presence within the Defenders and the environmental community from the time they moved to the county in 1970 until the year she passed in 2023. "Here's this woman doing all this work and as she got older, she continued to do all the work, so even if I had a bad day and was feeling kind of weak, I would look at Alice and think if she can do it then I can do it too," Anne said. "I have no excuse."

As a young Defender, I can confidently say this is a legacy Alice has passed down. On my hardest days, I look at Anne, Pat, Barb, Kim, Dwight and countless others and think, "If they can keep going, I can too." And going forward, I will surely find myself regularly thinking, "What would Alice do?"

Alice Howenstine passed peacefully in the early hours of Christmas Day surrounded by her loving family. The Defenders Board of Directors and staff send their deepest condolences, support and appreciation to the entire Howenstine family.



UPDATE FROM ERIN KENNEDY, YOUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Hello Defenders! I hope you all had a happy and healthy holiday season. It's hard to believe that 2023 has come and gone. I think it's important to look back at all that was accomplished in the past year to energize us and plan for the work ahead in 2024. 2023 was a very successful year for our action teams. We diverted 87, 232 cubic feet of Styrofoam from being sent to a landfill, recycled 664 fluorescent tube lights and 965 lbs. of batteries, got fourteen units of government in McHenry County signed on to the Mayors' Monarch Pledge which accounted for 25 percent of all participants in the state of Illinois. With help from our community partners, we hosted six Best Management Practice Workshops for residents and municipalities to receive valuable environmental information from local experts. We kicked off our Race to Reduce Waste, which assisted 14 local restaurants to start composting their food scraps. The success of that program has allowed us to work with 9 breweries in the county to showcase their sustainability initiatives. The Big Fall Book Sale was the most successful to date, with 1,000 more books saved from a landfill than previous years. Our bookstores recorded 4,000 volunteer hours, and the Green Read celebrated its 5th birthday in November. I'm excited to build upon this momentum in the coming year, and I can't wait to report back to you on everything the Defenders accomplish in 2024.

ANNUAL DINNER & MEMBERSHIP MEETING - SUNDAY, MARCH 3, 2024

DATE: Sunday, March 3, 2024

TIME: 3PM to 7PM

LOCATION: 31 North, 217 Front St, McHenry, IL

COST: \$50 per member; \$60 per non-member; table sponsorship available.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS: Action Teams & Directors of MCSEEP & Paddle the Kish

With the hopes of finding a location we can utilize for years to come, we are once again changing things up for our Annual Dinner and Meeting in 2024. We are very excited to hold our dinner at 31 North in McHenry. The food is superb and the space is clean and beautiful.

Dinner invitations will be mailed out soon, so look forward to them arriving in your mailboxes. Please note, all entrée options will be served as gluten free this year, as we will be having a family-style dinner! And don't worry, there will be an excellent vegan choice for all of our vegan friends.

We are also adding an extra hour to our event this year to ensure there is plenty of time for socializing, eating and fundraising. You'll also be able to meet our Executive Director Erin at the event, if you haven't already!

Lastly, for the first time in a while, our speakers will be Defenders' members! We are thrilled to have our Action Teams and directors of our partner organizations as this year's speakers. We think this will be the perfect opportunity to catch up on what the organization has been up to in 2023 and our plans for the future.

So, please save the date and we'll all look forward to gathering in person at a new location for this special annual event.

If you are interested in being an event sponsor, please contact Erin at defendersdirector@gmail.com.

AWARD NOMINATION INFO

Every year we award individuals and groups to recognize them for their contributions. Please email your nominations for our 2023 awards to: defendersdirector@gmail.com by February 8.

- The Theta Award honors an individual or group who has shown an outstanding commitment to improving the health of McHenry County's land, water and air.
- The Government/Organization Award is given to a McHenry County governmental group or organization that has made a significant contribution to environmental protection in McHenry County during the past year.
- The Volunteer Award is for The Defenders' member who has made a significant contribution to the good of the organization through their volunteer efforts during the past year.
- The Young Environmental Defender Award is for a Defenders' member under age 20 who has contributed most to environmental protection in the county in the past year.



Donations of Auction and Raffle Items Needed by February 3 for Upcoming Annual Meeting

BY ANNE BASTEN, CHAIR OF FUNDRAISING ACTION TEAM

Once again, the Environmental Defenders will be hosting an online silent auction for the Annual Meeting as one of their fundraising events. Donations for the auction and an on-site bag raffle are being accepted at the Defenders' Office in Woodstock now through February 3, 2024.

Online auction donation ideas

Consumables: handmade soap or toiletries, note cards, candy, non-perishable foods, gift certificates for perishable food items, movie tickets, wine, beer, gift certificates to restaurants or for handmade or locally grown food items, house or garden plants, etc.

Art/craft objects: custom-made items, i.e. jewelry, mittens, scarves, unique artwork, etc.

Service offers: an hour of general labor, an hour of brush clearing, a couple hours of garlic mustard pulling, guided hikes in private natural areas, plant identification, general sewing repair (buttons, zippers, etc.), review of a will, or offer a one-hour consultation in your area of expertise.

Other items that bid well: themed gift baskets, dog and cat items including food and toys, surprise items, and experiences.

The final deadline for descriptions of the offered services or the items to be in the office is February 3, 2024. The online auction takes more preparation as the items must be photographed and uploaded into the internet program, so the sooner you get information turned in, the better!

The bag raffle is for those attending the annual meeting in person and may include perishable consumables. These items must go home with the winners on the same day as the event! Pictures and/or descriptions of the perishable items for the bag raffle must also be submitted by the February 3 deadline so raffle bags may be prepared. Surprise items may be pulled from the online auction donations to add to the in-person fun!

On-site bag raffle donation ideas

Homemade baked goods (cake, pies, bread, etc.) eggs, "Fabulous Hot Fudge", etc.

Photos and/or descriptions of perishable items can be sent by email to Anne Basten at Basten1@sbcglobal.net by February 3, 2024. Perishable items cannot be brought to the office. They must be taken to the March 3, 2024 Annual Meeting and will be used in the bag raffle.

Must-haves for ALL donations:

Your contact information (name, phone, and email), a minimum price to start the auction, the approximate value, and an expiration date for services offered. If you can create a certificate for your service, that would be helpful.

All donations are greatly appreciated! It is possible that your donation will be combined with other donations or may not be used at this event. The Defenders' Fundraising Team may determine another way for your items or skills to benefit the organization and can return unsold items if you request.

There will also be TWO 50/50 raffles at the March 3, 2024 Annual Meeting in addition to the auction and bag raffle! One will be online for those who cannot attend the meeting and one will be in person at the annual meeting. Join online and in person to increase your chances of winning!

Questions? Call Anne Basten at 815-382-7741 and leave a message. Anne or one of the auction team members will call you back.



THE GREEN BOOKSTORES' WINTER UPDATE

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

Fall is by far the busiest time of year for The Green Read and The Green Spot. After breaking down the Big Fall Book Sale on October 8th, a hallway sale was set up for the rest of October outside of The Green Spot. Although the numbers were down because of the snow on Halloween, hundreds of trick-or-treaters still visited The Green Read for the Halloween Handout on October 31st. On November 4th, the bookstores had a combined booth for the second year at MCC's Green Living Expo. The Green Read celebrated its 5th birthday with a party for volunteers and Defenders' members on November 16th. Whew! Are you as tired as we are yet? And that was all in the span of about six weeks!

Thanksgiving weekend is traditionally, by far, our busiest of the year. It is wonderful to see so many people supporting local businesses on Black Friday and Small Business Saturday! This year we focused on bringing in more puzzles. In addition to standard 275, 500, and 1000 piece puzzles, we also offer seek & find puzzles, jigsaw duels and puzzles with multiple sized pieces that the whole family can enjoy together.

The Green Spot participated in the "Legend of the Pickle" holiday ornament scavenger hunt in Woodstock. The Green Read had a special visit from Santa on December 10 where he read 'Twas the Night Before Christmas to hard-of-hearing children with the help of an American Sign Language interpreter.

None of this would be possible without our team of dedicated volunteers. They are truly the heart of both stores. Their efforts at everything from greeting customers, sorting donations, erasing prices, peeling off stickers, shelving new arrivals, tidying up shelves and sweeping out leaves (just to name a few of the many things they do!) are what make the stores look so wonderful and inviting. Thank you all so much for all your hard work!

So if you haven't been in the stores for a while, stop by this winter and say hi. Bring a hot coffee and browse to your heart's content... you're bound to find a must-read book on our shelves. What better way to spend a cold winter day? See you soon!



THE GREEN READ GETTING READY FOR THE HOLIDAY SEASON



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: JANEY WALTERS, JILL KRUPP, MARY FORNI, MARY AND STAN PERRIN AT THE BIRTHDAY PARTY



ASSISTANT MANAGER DIANE GREENMAN AND MANAGER PAM JOHNSON AT THE GREEN LIVING EXPO BOOTH

CITIZENS CLIMATE LOBBY MCHENRY COUNTY CHAPTER

BY BETH HOLLAND, CCL MEMBER

December is the month for celebrating for the McHenry County Chapter of CCL. It's a special month in our chapter's history, and at our December meetings we combine an appreciation of the year's achievements with planning for our next climate actions.

In December 2014 the Environmental Defenders of McHenry County invited people concerned about climate change to meet at the Woodstock Public Library. During the meeting Jim Thrall told the founding story of CCL in 2007 by philanthropist and activist Marshall Saunders, the need for climate change legislation at the federal level and his desire to start a new chapter. Previously he had talked at McHenry County College, and Lois and Rick Johnson had decided that they would help start a chapter. Several people at the library presentation also became founding members, and our new chapter held its first meeting the next month at Ridgefield Crystal Lake Presbyterian Church.

In December 2015 we celebrated the completion of our first year. We base our work on CCL's foundation of persistence, respect, inclusion and nonpartisanship. CCL has a national staff and regional and state volunteers that train and support members in all activities. The purpose of every action is to build support in Congress for a bipartisan solution to climate change. We provide information by tabling, writing opinion letters to newspapers, posting on social media, giving presentations and meeting with community leaders. Twice a year we lobby, meet with our members of Congress and/or their staff, show our appreciation for work they have done and request them to sponsor or co-sponsor specific climate legislation.

Persistence pays—it took ten years for the Energy Innovation Bill to be introduced in Congress at the end of 2018, and it has been reintroduced in the three succeeding Congresses. The bill is mainly like CCL's long held climate solution, a fee on the pollution caused by carbon-based fuels, with the fee returned to American households.

In 2019, the “largest public statement of economists in history,” signed by all living chairs of the Federal Reserve, 28 Nobel Laureates and more than 3,500 other economists, was published in The Wall Street Journal. The statement advocates for a policy wherein a fee is put on carbon pollution and all funds raised are returned directly to households in the form of “carbon dividends.” (The Salt Lake Tribune, November 24, 2021)

December 2023 marked nine years of climate legislation action by our chapter. During those years our two original co-leaders have moved, and we transitioned to three co-leaders, Pat Dieckhoff, Karen Dombrowski and Beth Holland. Several members are the mainstay of our tabling teams that provide information about our solutions to climate change that are based on science and economics. This year Linda Simko, a newer member, knowing our need to involve more young people, designed an internship and presented it to the environmental clubs at two schools. She now mentors an active, earnest and enthusiastic high school senior.

Citizens' Climate Lobby also changed in 2023 by adding three new policies to its original. They are: Healthy Forests, which includes urban trees; Electrification and Efficiency of Buildings; and Permitting Reform, to streamline the approval of new energy projects, most of which are renewable energy.

Finally, now McHenry County's Congressional districts have changed, and our opportunities to lobby have grown. When our chapter began, the county was in one district, IL-14.

After the 2020 Census, redistricting resulted in five Congressional districts: IL- 8, 9, 10, 11 and 16. This year we met with Representatives Jan Schakowsky, Darin LaHood and Bill Foster. Scheduling and preparing for a lobby meeting is challenging; we bring our appreciation, present our concerns about climate change, request legislative work on solutions and ask questions to learn more about our officials. Meetings take place in district offices, or more recently on Zoom. Each June CCL hosts an annual International Conference and Lobby Day which includes the Senators. Except for the pandemic years, that is held in Washington, D.C. where lobbying gives the ultimate experience for the CCL member to become a part of our representative government.



Citizens' Climate Lobby

INFORMATIONAL SESSIONS ON CLEAN ENERGY INCENTIVES CONTINUE IN 2024

BY CINDY SKRUKRUD, CHAIR OF WATER & NATURAL RESOURCES PROTECTION TEAM

Becoming energy efficient, or using less energy for the same services, is one of the easiest and most cost-effective ways to reduce energy use. Right now, there are tremendous federal and state incentives to help homeowners and renters cut their energy footprints.

The Defenders will continue to host free informational sessions on the tax credits and rebates available to residents for improving the energy efficiency of their homes and switching their appliances and cars to electricity. Staff from the Citizens Utility Board (CUB) will lead the sessions.

In January, two Clean Energy Incentives webinars will be held. Join from 6-7 pm on Tuesday, January 23 for a session presented in Spanish. Then from 6-7 pm on Wednesday, January 24, the same session will be presented again in English. See the calendar on the backpage for the Zoom links for these virtual sessions. There will also be in-person sessions held later in the spring in Crystal Lake, Harvard, Lake in the Hills, McHenry and Wonder Lake; some of these sessions will be presented in Spanish. To receive email updates on future informational sessions, sign up at <https://tinyurl.com/signup4energysavings>.

Between the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), federal legislation passed in 2022, and the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA), a state act passed in 2021, several tax credits and rebates are available for energy efficiency and electrification for Illinois residents. Low and medium income (LMI) residents can often receive higher incentives. This includes tax credits for weatherization, renewable energy, battery systems, electric vehicles and rebates for electric appliances.

Here are two examples of what is available from the [CUB's Guide to the Inflation Reduction Act](#):

- Starting in 2023 and for each year for the next decade, all consumers can claim a tax credit for 30 percent of the cost of qualified projects that improve efficiency, up to \$1,200 annually.
- The IRA includes \$263.6 million to help low and moderate-income Illinoisans transition away from natural gas over the next 10 years. The funding should become available in spring/summer 2024. Consumers with income below 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI) can claim a rebate covering the full cost of electric appliances, up to a \$14,000 cap. Consumers with income below 150% of the AMI can get 50% off the cost of appliances up to \$14,000.

The Environmental Defenders of McHenry County is the recipient of a grant from McHenry County's Community Development Block Grant and HOME Investment Partnerships Program to inform and educate McHenry County residents about the various incentives and rebates they can utilize to improve their energy efficiency and transition to cleaner forms of energy. To learn more, visit the Defenders resources page at <https://tinyurl.com/4energysavings>.



TRIANGLE PRAIRIE RESTORATION DAY

By Nancy Schietzelt, Volunteer

On Saturday, February 3, 2024, we could use your help at Triangle Prairie on the corner of Hwy 14 and Lake Avenue in Woodstock. 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, get some great exercise and enjoy some time outdoors!

SENSIBLE SALTING AT HOME

BY SCOTT KUYKENDALL, MCHENRY COUNTY WATER RESOURCES SPECIALIST

As another winter season descends upon the region, we all need to prepare for managing snow and ice to maintain safety on our paved surfaces including roads, parking lots, driveways and sidewalks. Whether you're using a shovel, snowblower or plow, the primary goal of management is the physical removal of snow and ice. Road salt or other deicing chemicals are toxic materials that should only be used to prevent ice from forming on frequently traveled portions of paved surfaces or to melt ice that has already formed. This is not a suggestion to reduce safety, but only to apply what is necessary and where it is needed, to maintain safe paved surfaces.

Although road salt and chemical deicers can be effective tools, people rarely stop to think how these toxic chemicals impact the environment so their over application has become commonplace. Excess deicer, beyond what is actually needed to provide safety, is waste that provides absolutely no benefit but comes at great environmental and economic cost.

Most deicing materials contain chloride which is highly soluble in water. Once the chloride dissolves in water there is no practical way to remove it. To put the toxicity of salt into perspective, one teaspoon of salt will permanently contaminate 5-gallons of water. When snow melts or it rains, the chlorides from road salt and deicing chemicals simply run off the paved surfaces to pollute our waterways or infiltrate through the soil and contaminate our groundwater.

It is also important to understand what deicing chemicals are commonly available and when they should be used. Sodium chloride for instance, commonly referred to as road salt, is the least expensive and most widely used deicer but it only works down to 15° F. Therefore, when temperatures drop below 15° F another type of deicer such as calcium chloride (effective down to -25° F) or magnesium chloride (effective down to 0° F) should be used. Calcium magnesium acetate (CMA) is a non-chloride based deicer that is considered to be the least damaging for the environment and pets, but is only effective down to 20° F and is too expensive for use on a large scale like roadways and parking lots.

Since there is no viable alternative to chloride-based deicers, our best option is to make sure they are being used wisely. Fortunately, there are a lot of practical tools or actions available to safely reduce the volume of chemical deicers being applied to paved surfaces. These are often called Sensible Salting or Salt Smart practices that maintain safety while reducing pollution:

1. Physically remove as much snow and ice as possible before applying any chemicals. Only apply chemical deicers on ice...do not use chemical deicers to "melt off" snow.
2. Only apply what is needed...Twelve ounces of salt – about as much as would fill a coffee mug – is typically enough to treat a 20-foot driveway or about 10 squares of sidewalk.
3. Make sure to spread the material so it is broadly dispersed, avoiding clumps or piles. Each kernel of deicer can melt up to a 12-inch diameter of ice so there should be space between them.
4. Use the right deicer for the temperature and conditions. Different deicing chemicals are only effective down to specific temperatures. At home it is also possible to use sand or some types of clean kitty litter instead of chemical deicers. Although these will not melt ice, they can improve safety by providing traction.

4 Steps to Be Salt Smart

<p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">1</p> <p>Shovel first. Clear all snow from driveways and sidewalks before it turns to ice.</p> 	<p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">2</p> <p>Size up. More salt does not mean more melting. A 12-ounce coffee mug of salt should be enough for 500 sq ft of driveway or about 10 sidewalk squares.</p> 	<p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">3</p> <p>Spread. Distribute salt evenly, not in clumps.</p> 	<p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">4</p> <p>Switch. Rock salt stops working if the temperature is below 15 degrees. When temperatures drop that low, switch to a deicer formulated for colder temperatures.</p>  
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One of the most important tools that helps to reduce chloride pollution is the use of liquid brine instead of solid road salt or deicer. Liquid brine is increasingly being used for "anti-icing" on roads and parking lots. Anti-icing is the application of brine to paved surfaces before a storm to prevent ice from bonding, making it easier to physically remove snow and maintain safe pavement without repeated applications of solid material. Although the brine is still a chloride-based product, it results in significantly less chloride pollution, provides improved safety and reduces material costs.

SENSIBLE SALTING CONT.

Remember, Sensible Salting or Salt Smart practices are not about reducing safety...they are about using deicers responsibly. There are times that the application of deicers will be necessary to maintain safety in winter. The important thing is to understand what you are putting into the environment and applying the material wisely.

For more information please visit saltsmart.org which provides excellent information for families, businesses and others interested in reducing pollution from deicers. This includes a short video called Brine at Home that takes you step by step to make and use liquid brine at home. This is a fun and easy project that is perfect for a family activity. You can also watch presentations from the Environmental Defenders November 2022 Talk and Tour workshop that focused on Sensible Salting and Water Resources.

The Environmental Defenders have free bookmarks of the included infographic available at their Green Read bookstore in Crystal Lake and their Green Spot bookstore in Woodstock. Please stop by to pick up bookmarks for you and your family. If you have additional questions please contact Scott Kuykendall, McHenry County Water Resources Specialist, at SHKuykendall@mchenrycountyil.gov

RIDGEFIELD TRACE ADOPT-A-TRAIL VOLUNTEERS

BY NANCY SCHIETZELT, VOLUNTEER

Once the Ridgefield Trace Trail along Hwy 14 was completed, the Defenders adopted the portion from Lake Avenue down to Culver's, most of which borders Triangle Prairie located on the corner of Hwy 14 and Lake Avenue in Woodstock. During the past several years Guido and Carol Giammattei (right) have served as our volunteers to collect the trash along the trail. Due to a change in circumstances, they no longer have the availability to continue this task. So, we wish to thank them immensely for taking on this task in cold and warm weather, to keep trash from blowing into the prairie and for keeping that portion of the trail cleaned up! Their work has certainly been appreciated!

At the same time, we are now seeking new volunteers to collect the trash along that portion of the trail – just two feet along each side. It's best if the task can be completed once a month, as many things are carried by the wind from the big parking lots across the highway. If this is a task that interests you, and you and a family member or friend would like to take on the responsibility, please contact Nancy Schietzelt at 815-356-1710 for more information.



A SUCCESSFUL CLOTHING SWAP & A PLANT/ BOOK SWAP COMING IN FEBRUARY

On December 9 the Defenders teamed up with business member Fulfilled Thrift, located upstairs at the Woodstock Square Mall, to put on the first of what we hope will be many clothing swaps. The swap, marketed as a Sustainable Christmas Clothing Swap, received much interest and had several attend and leave with wonderful new-to-them items to give as gifts or to spruce up their own wardrobes.

This was the first in a series of swaps the Defenders are planning. Next up: a plant and book swap at The Green Read on Tuesday, February 13 from 6-8pm. Bring a plant, a book or both to trade with other attendees! The store will also be open for sales and attendees will receive 20% off book purchases.

Stay tuned for more swaps to come in partnership with other local businesses and not-for-profits!

PRAIRIE RESTORATION AT DEFENDERS' DEAN STREET PROPERTY

BY NANCY SCHIETZELT, VOLUNTEER

Volunteers worked for many years to clear buckthorn and honeysuckle from the areas on the north and west sides of our property on Dean Street. The goal was to return the border on the west to prairie species and the area on the north to savanna species with controlled burns and seeding. But with sporadic once a month workdays, the goal seemed to be elusive. We're so excited that it will now be attainable with a generous donation from Ted Thornton in memory of his wife Judy. We have hired Jack Kaskel and his crew from Red Buffalo Nursery to complete this work for us. They are just getting started with clearing and treating the resprouts from invasives and burning the areas this fall, as seen in the photo. Seeding will take place later in the winter with work continuing during 2024. If you would like to watch the progress, you can park at MCCD's Kishwaukee Headwaters Conservation Area at 1606 Dean St. and follow the path north to our property. Mowed pathways encircle the area, so you can enjoy a lovely walk there, especially in the spring.



We have a single pedestal educational sign that we want to place at the site to inform people about the importance of prairie habitats for pollinators. It is similar to the one that we placed at Triangle Prairie at the corner of Hwy 14 and Lake Avenue in Woodstock. We just need someone to install it for us after the soil thaws in the spring. If you have the ability to do so, or if you know someone that could install this sign for us, please contact Nancy Schietzelt at 815-356-1710.

THANK YOU (AGAIN) TED!



FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, TED THORNTON HAS AGAIN DONATED \$50,000 IN MEMORY OF HIS LOVING WIFE JUDY.



Welcome New Defenders' Members!



- Zachary Simon - Algonquin
- Michael Urban - Chicago
- Patrick O'Donnell - River Forest
- Sarah Farley - Woodstock
- Christine Galat - Fox River Grove
- Kathy Olsen - Woodstock
- Tree of Like Unitarian - McHenry
- Madison Benezra - McHenry
- Jane Grant - Crystal Lake
- Catie Bullen - Union
- Amy & Jesse Paplanus - Lake in the Hills
- Sundar Natarajan - Hoffman Estates
- Jennifer Williamson - Wonder Lake
- Claudia Field - Cary
- Lydia Johnson - McHenry
- Martha Schaffer - Woodstock
- Beth O'Keeffe - Crystal Lake
- Katherine Godfrey-Mikkelsen - Crystal Lake
- Monica Potempa - Niles
- Megan Liebetrau - Realtor Berkshire Hathaway
- Natural Areas Restoration Services - Richmond
- Gunnar Gitlin - Woodstock
- Leslie Kvistad - Woodstock
- Chantel Jemrette - McHenry

Scholarship Application Period OPEN

The Environmental Defenders is proud to offer up to three \$2,000 scholarships to deserving McHenry County high school seniors who plan to move forward in college with educational pursuits in the areas of environment, sustainability or conservation. Applications from interested seniors who qualify are available at the office for pick-up or on our website: <https://mcdef.org/scholarship-and-internships/>. Scholarship applications are reviewed by a committee of our Outreach Action Team and announced prior to senior award ceremonies, whenever possible. Please share this scholarship opportunity with high school seniors in your life! Application due date: April 1, 2024.

UPDATE ON MCHENRY COUNTY SCHOOLS ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAM (MCSEEP)

BY PAM KING, DIRECTOR OF MCSEEP

This fall we received a generous donation from an anonymous donor. If you are interested in supporting Environmental Education throughout McHenry County, please contact me, Pamela Duncan King at mcseepdirector@gmail.com.

MCSEEP has scheduled many schools for January to May 2024. We are looking forward to a busy and exciting late winter and spring. This fall, we continued to expand our PreK offerings. Hannah Pfaff developed a lesson for students to see the different colors of pigments in the leaves.

In addition, I received some materials from Pat Dieckhoff who was 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. Included is a photo of students from Briargate Elementary School in Cary. We are still at Briargate all these years later. This January we will be teaching grades 1 - 5!

Now, a couple of requests for YOU: I am starting to think about the 40 year anniversary of MCSEEP that will be here in 2027! If you have an early memory of MCSEEP or the McHenry County Schools Recycling Education Program, please email me as I'd like to start gathering stories.

Also, do you have a "green" career and a link to McHenry County? I am working on updating our 8th grade curriculum about "Green Careers." I want to include some local individuals to allow students to see the people behind the important work you do. Please let me know if you are interested in making a 3-minute video of your career!



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BRIARGATE ELEMENTARY STUDENTS, DISTRICT 26, HELP GATHER PAPER FOR RECYCLES- CIRCA 1989



SAFETY FIRST! A TEACHER HELPS A PRE-K STUDENT WITH EXTRACTING DIFFERENT PIGMENTS FROM LEAVES

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

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ABOUT EARTHCONNECT NEWSLETTER

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2024

January

TUE 23 | Spanish Renewable Energy Tax Rebate Info Session

6pm - 7pm

Zoom: <http://tinyurl.com/bd986ra8>

WED 24 | English Renewable Energy Tax Rebate Info Session

6pm - 7pm

Zoom: <http://tinyurl.com/82rj5wys>

February

SAT 3 | Triangle Prairie Restoration Day

9am - 11am

Triangle Prairie, Woodstock

TUE 6 | Open House

4pm - 7pm

Warp Corps, Woodstock

TUE 13 | Book & Plant Swap

6pm - 8pm

The Green Read, Crystal Lake

March

SUN 3 | Defenders' Annual Meeting

3pm - 7pm

31 North, McHenry

Recurring Events

FIRST WED OF EVERY MONTH | Green Drinks

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

5pm - 7pm

In-person and virtually on Zoom

(Registration required)

Presentation begins at 6pm

FOURTH SUN OF EVERY MONTH | Sterne's Fen Restoration Work Day

9am - 11am

5617 Hillside Dr, Crystal Lake

Environmental Defenders of McHenry County

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