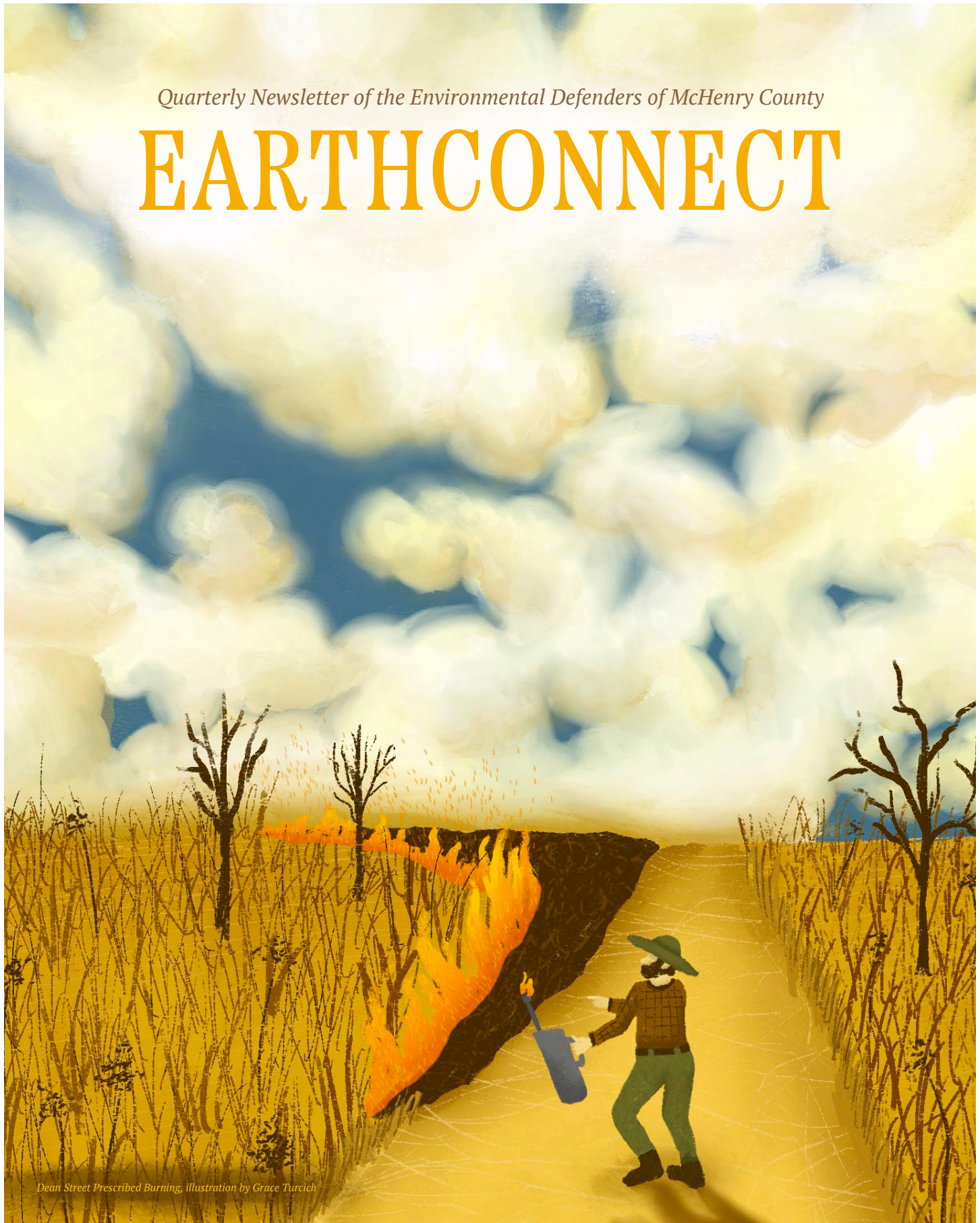


Quarterly Newsletter of the Environmental Defenders of McHenry County

EARTHCONNECT



Dean Street Prescribed Burning, illustration by Grace Turcich

Table of Contents

01 A Note from Our Director	2
02 Springing into Action	3
03 Spring Cleaning	4
04 We Are Pollinator Defenders	5
05 Use It Again	6
06 Off to a Green Start	7
07 Building Partnerships in Education	8
08 Practices Make Perfect	9
09 Setting Fire To the Prairies	10

01

A Note from Our Director

A SEASON OF GROWTH AND ACTION

Spring is a time of renewal and growth, both in nature and in our organization. This year, we are excited to see our programs expand, and our advocacy efforts grow stronger. We have seen incredible support from residents, volunteers, and businesses, and I am thrilled to share some highlights of what we've been up to:

Increased Community Engagement: Our outreach efforts continue to gain momentum. We will host several educational workshops and community clean-ups this year, bringing together people from all corners of McHenry County. These events provide a great opportunity to connect with like-minded individuals who are passionate about making a tangible difference in their own neighborhoods.

Advocacy for Local Environmental Policies: EDMC has been involved in advocating for policies that prioritize sustainable land use, conservation, and climate resilience. Through partnerships with local governments, we've made strides toward implementing eco-friendly policies that protect our water, air, and wildlife. Our ongoing efforts to protect natural habitats and reduce pollution are integral to securing a healthier future for McHenry County. As part of our commitment to sustainability, we've supported educational campaigns encouraging local businesses and residents to adopt more eco-friendly practices. From waste reduction to energy conservation, we're working to ensure that environmental sustainability is within reach for all.

TAKE ACTION: VOLUNTEER AND MAKE AN IMPACT

One of the best ways to get involved with the Environmental Defenders of McHenry County is by volunteering. Whether you're interested in helping with community clean-ups, participating in volunteer workdays, or assisting with office tasks, your time and effort are invaluable to the success of our mission. Spring is the perfect time to roll up your sleeves and join us in the field—there's no better way to connect with the environment than by helping to restore and protect it.

A HEARTFELT THANK YOU

I want to take a moment to express my deepest gratitude to you, our supporters. Your donations, volunteer hours, and dedication to environmental stewardship make everything we do possible. Together, we are making a meaningful difference in preserving McHenry County.

I am excited for the opportunities that spring brings and for the continued progress we will make as a community. Thank you for being part of our work. Let's continue to protect, preserve, and advocate for the environment we all call home.

We invite you to stay involved by joining us for our upcoming events, supporting our initiatives, and spreading the word about the importance of environmental protection in McHenry County. Let's make this spring a season of action and positive change!

With gratitude,
Erin Kennedy, *Executive Director*

Springing into Action

Reducing Food Waste from the Grocery Store to Your Fridge

WRITTEN BY CECILIA CARMAN

Springtime is a great time of year for the Waste Reduction Team. We celebrate Food Waste Prevention Week and International Compost Awareness Week. So this is a perfect time to review how you can be more sustainable in the kitchen.

TACKLING THE FRIDGE

- Upper shelves are warmer. Great place for leftovers and ready to eat foods as in yogurt and cheese.
- Lowest shelf is the coldest. Best place to store meats.
- High humidity is for foods that wilt as in broccoli, herbs, carrots, etc.
- Low humidity is for foods that rot as in apples, grapes, mushrooms.
- Do not overfill. Foods need air to circulate to keep fresh.
- Use clear containers so you don't forget what is in your fridge.

BETTER APPROACHES TO GROCERY SHOPPING

Plan your meals ahead.

Use the bulk aisle to ensure you buy only how much you need.

Use *Handpick.com* to find recipes of foods already have in your home.

Stick to the list. Only 16% of us do!

SOLUTIONS FOR FOOD WASTE

Backyard compost. Learn how to here <https://illinoiscomposts.org/composting-at-home/>

Join the Defenders food scrap drop off program at only \$5/month

LRS will take fruits, vegetables, coffee grinds, bread, egg shells.

Flood Brothers take all foods in their yard waste.

**Save food. Save money.
Save the planet.**

RESOURCES WE LOVE:

savethefood.com

wastedfoodaction.org

illinoiscompost.org

epga.gov/sustainable-management-food/



Spring Cleaning

Boone Creek Cleanup

WRITTEN BY CINDY SKRUKRUD

MAINTAINING A CLEAN CREEK

On March 29th, Defenders' Water & Natural Resources Protection Action Team and Boone-Dutch Creeks Watershed Alliance hosted their annual spring litter cleanup on Boone Creek. A crew of nine undertook two hours of cleaning up litter along both sides of the creek, working south from the City of McHenry's Public Works Building to Rte 120. Due to all the trash that accumulates along the creek here, especially on the west side where it blows off a shopping center parking lot, the crew was not able to completely clean up the west side. They collected 66 pounds of trash and 9 pounds of

recyclables that the City of McHenry disposed of and recycled. Saved for reuse were two cast iron frypans and a pair of unopened sunglasses. The crew is following up with the grocery store and shopping center management and the City of McHenry to figure out ways to reduce the trash and to capture and clean it up regularly before it reaches the creek. Everyone who helped out is much appreciated!



We Are Pollinator Defenders

Join the Homegrown National Park Movement

WRITTEN BY CINDY SKRUKRUD

WE ARE BIODIVERSITY HEROES

Want to become a biodiversity hero? Learn how planting natives and removing invasive species can make you a part of the Homegrown National Park movement. McHenry County's conservation groups and libraries are teaming up to bring you tons of resources during the annual Pollinator Week of June 16-22.

Come learn about this nation-wide call-to-action with a short film, "*What's the Rush?*", by renowned conservationist, Doug Tallamy. The film will be shown at eleven area libraries over the course of the week. Each showing will be followed by a presentation and Q&A with a local pollinator expert from one of the many conservation organizations that are co-sponsoring these events with libraries throughout our region.

Additionally, outdoors events and celebrations are also planned during Pollinator Week where you can learn about our native landscape and how it supports pollinators that are in peril and need your help. These include walks, stewardship events at pollinator gardens and natural areas, and a wrap-up celebration on Sunday, June 22nd at the McHenry County Conservation District's Prairie View Education Center.

A schedule of the library and outdoors events is posted at tinyurl.com/2025PollinatorWk. Join in as many as you like!



A RUSTY PATCHED BUMBLEBEE
AND SERVICEBERRY

Use It Again

Give Your Gently Used Items a Second Life

WRITTEN BY ANNE BASTEN

CLEARING THE CLUTTER

Are you looking for a way to clear out clutter while making a difference in the community? Donate your gently used items to our Use It Again Sale! Your donations help keep quality items out of landfills and give them a second chance to be used and loved again.

Location Algonquin Township Road District
Building 6B (Community garage)
3702 US-14, Crystal Lake

Donations Accepted

Sunday, June 1, 2025 | 2 – 4PM

M–W, June 2 – June 4 | 10AM – 3PM

Sale Dates

June 5 – June 7 | 9AM – 4PM

June 12 – June 14 | 9AM – 4PM

VOLUNTEER WITH US!

Looking for a hands-on way to support our mission? Join us as a volunteer! We need help with:

- * Accepting and sorting donations
- * Organizing and pricing items for sale
- * Assisting on sale days

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR SALE DAYS!

Your donations support our community through our sales events. Be sure to stop by and find a great deal while supporting a great cause!

Thank you for helping us reduce waste and support our community! **Your generosity makes a difference.**

WHAT'S ACCEPTABLE

We gladly accept items that are clean, in good condition, and ready for a new home.

Our best-selling items include:

- * Garden tools and supplies
- * Hand tools and hardware
- * Housewares and kitchen items
- * Small working appliances
- * Children's toys
- * Unupholstered furniture in good condition

WHAT WE CANNOT ACCEPT

To ensure safety and quality, we kindly ask that you do NOT donate:

- * Computers, TVs, and other related electronics (*printers, modems, etc*)
- * Children's car seats or cribs
- * Large appliances (*washers, dryers, refrigerators, etc.*)
- * Upholstered furniture (*chairs, mattresses, etc.*)
- * Clothing & shoes (*can be put in bins up front*)
- * Stuffed animals
- * Broken, unclean, or hazardous items

Off to a Green Start

The "Green" Bookstores

WRITTEN BY PAM JOHNSON & DIANE GREENMAN

After all the holiday hustle and bustle, the winter months are a nice chance to catch our breath and reset. Although foot traffic at the bookstores quiets down with the cold weather, there is still a lot going on behind the scenes, and it gives us an opportunity to catch up on some projects that had been on hold during the holidays.

BEING PRODUCTIVE IN THE COLD WEATHER

In January, we held an appreciation celebration for our wonderful volunteers with a pizza party in the Woodstock Square Mall. Many of them have been volunteering at the stores for years! They truly make the bookstores two special places in our County.

Also in January, we tackled some behind the scenes tasks including reorganizing our storage space, replacing a leaky sink, and alphabetizing hundreds of items in the bookstores. In February, *The Green Spot* participated in the Defenders' Winter Get Together and welcomed friendly faces, old and new.

Over the past few winter months, both bookstores were updating and expanding the Read-A-Likes binder, which had not been updated since 2020. Next time you're wondering what to read, ask the volunteer or refer to the Read-A-Likes binder for some suggestions!

SUPPORTING YOUNG READERS

Recent donations from Half Price Books and books collected from the drop box at the Algonquin Township has significantly expanded our children's sections at the bookstores recently. The shelves are chock full of books just waiting to be read!

Stay tuned to our monthly newsletters and the weekly eNews to keep up on sales and events at both bookstores. Looking forward to a busy 2025 and hope to see you soon!



Building Partnerships in Education

McHenry County Schools Environmental Education Program

WRITTEN BY PAM DUNCAN KING

OUR EDUCATIONAL REACH

McHenry County Schools Environmental Education Program had a great year. This year, Environmental Educators - Hannah Pfaff, Gigi Carlson, and Abby Winters - brought our lessons to over 10,000 students here in McHenry County.

For the remainder of the school year we will be visiting Crosby Elementary School in Harvard, North Elementary School in Crystal Lake, Chesak Elementary School in Huntley, Harrison School in Wonder Lake, Ringwood School Primary Center in Ringwood, Westwood Elementary School in Woodstock, Northwood Middle School in Woodstock, The Goddard School in Lake in the Hills, Johnsborg Elementary School in Johnsborg, and Creekside Middle School in Woodstock.

SUMMER PLANNING

This summer, our work will be focused on building partnerships. We aim to begin work with the McHenry County Conservation District to help with the Openlands program - *Birds in Our Neighborhood*. MCSEEP and MCCD education will be taking over this program for McHenry County starting in September of 2025. As director, I will also be busy with fundraising to reduce the cost we must pass on to schools. The true cost to deliver our program to students is about \$125 per classroom. We currently charge schools \$30 per classroom. Over the summer months, our goal is to reduce the cost to our public schools as they face a looming loss of funds at the same time of rising prices, so I will be looking for additional funds from private donors and grants.

This summer we are looking for two people interested in joining MCSEEP as Environmental Educators. This is an ideal part-time position with variable hours each week for retired teachers, stay-at-home parents with children in school and young teachers still looking for that first position. Please share this information with those who might be interested.



AMERICAN
GOLDFINCH

Practices Make Perfect

Upcoming BMP Talk and Tours

WRITTEN BY NANCY SCHIETZELT & CINDY SKRUKRUD

Once again, our Water and Natural Resources Protection Action Team, in collaboration with the McHenry County Department of Planning and Development, is planning an exciting series of BMP Talks and Tours over the next several months. These events showcase some of the Best Management Practices (BMPs) being implemented in McHenry County. You are invited to attend these events. We also encourage you to invite your elected officials as well as staff members of your municipality, township, school district, park district, library, school, and church. Here is the schedule for 2025:

DIXIE CREEK STREAM RESTORATION

Friday, May 16 from 1-3 pm at Dixie Creek in Algonquin

Speaker: Brad Andresen, *Village of Algonquin Ecologist*

KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE FROM TOXIC PAVEMENT SEALANTS

Date and location are to be determined.

Speakers: Elected officials who have advanced legislation addressing toxic pavement sealants and representatives from the Illinois Department of Public Health on the requirements of the Illinois Coal Tar Sealant Disclosure Act

SUCCESSFUL NATURAL AREAS MANAGEMENT FOR HOMEOWNER ASSOCIATIONS (HOAS)

Friday, August 15 from 1-3 pm at McAndrew's Glen in Bull Valley

Speakers: Dennis Dreher, *environmental engineer and McAndrews Glen resident*, and Lisa Haderlein, *Executive Director of The Land Conservancy of McHenry County*

WATER REUSE IN MCHENRY COUNTY AND BEYOND

Friday, September 26 from 1-3 pm at Village of Huntley's West Wastewater Treatment Plant

Speakers: Sharon Waller, *Chicago Metropolitan Water Reclamation District Commissioner and organizer of the Illinois Section of the WaterReuse Association*; Tim Farrell, *Huntley Director of Public Works*; Adrian Pino, *Huntley Chief Wastewater Operator*

To be added to the email list for this series, please fill out the form at:
tinyurl.com/BMPTourSignup.

Find the updated schedule of 2025 events at
tinyurl.com/FridayBMPTours.

Also, if you would like to learn from past BMP Talks and Tours, you can watch them on our YouTube channel: Environmental Defenders of McHenry County

Setting Fire To the Prairies

Prescribed Burnings with the Defenders

WRITTEN BY CINDY SKRUKRUD & NANCY SCHIETZELT

BURNING FOR NEW GROWTH

On March 26th, a team of Defenders performed a prescribed burn at our Dean Street property. Ten volunteers grabbed their flappers, water packs, and torches and burned the patch of prairie. Approximately 6 acres were encompassed in the slow burn. Hopefully, the fire killed most of the small woody shrubs that were encroaching on the grasses and forbs in the area. The Water and Natural Resources Protection Action Team and their interns have worked over the years to keep invasive species such as common parsnip, thistles, and autumn olives from spreading through the property. Removal of invasives and burning the area will gradually help the land become more naturalized.

HISTORY OF THE LAND

With a \$100,000 grant that the Defenders secured from the Grand Victoria Foundation and a financial partnership with the City of Woodstock, McHenry County Conservation District (MCCD) and the McHenry-Lake Soil and Water Conservation District, 111 acres were purchased in 2001 as the first piece of a complex that now protects the headwaters of the Kishwaukee River. The Defenders hold and maintain 8 acres of the area. Over the years since it was acquired, Defenders has continuously worked to restore the property. Together with the adjoining lands, 170 acres of wetlands, oaks, hickories and prairie are available for enjoyment.





Our Team

DEFENDERS' STAFF

Erin Kennedy
Executive Director

Grace Turcich
Communication Specialist

Pam Johnson
*Manager at The Green Read
and the Green Spot*

Diane Greenman
*Assistant Manager at The Green Read
and The Green Spot*

DEFENDERS' OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

Kim Hankins *President*

Carl Edstrom *Treasurer*

Bev Dow *Secretary*

Zak Dolezal

Rico Rotta

Ken Santowski

Ashley Lange

Kim Compton

Mollie Dunn

ABOUT EARTHCONNECT NEWSLETTER

Published Quarterly by The Environmental
Defenders of McHenry County
LOC, ISSN# 1938-9795

114 S. Jefferson Street, Woodstock IL 60098
815-338-0393 | www.mcdef.org

Calendar

Spring/Summer Events of 2025

APRIL

Duke's Alehouse & Kitchen Fundraiser

April 1st- April 30th

SAT 19 | Earth Day

11AM – 3PM at Prairieview Education Center

TUES 22 | Plant and Book Swap

The Green Read

SUN 27 | Defenders' Annual Dinner & Meeting

3PM – 7PM at RedTail Golf Club

MAY

SUN 25 | Plant Sale Fundraiser

Countryside Flowershop, Nursery & Garden Center

JUNE

SUN 15 | Woodstock Pridefest

Woodstock, IL

SAVE THE DATE

NOV 1 | Green Living Expo 2025

Registration begins in April

RECURRING EVENTS

GREEN DRINKS

First Wednesday of Every Month

5PM – 7PM at Duke's Alehouse & Kitchen

In-Person and virtually on Zoom

Socializing begins at 5PM, Presentation begins at 6PM

STERNE'S FEN RESTORATION WORK DAY

Fourth Sunday of Every Month

9AM – 11AM

5617 Hillside Dr, Crystal Lake

Environmental Defenders of McHenry County

114 S Jefferson St.
Woodstock, IL 60098



Open Monday – Saturday 10am – 4pm

CLOSED SUNDAY

815-527-7122

110 S. Johnson Street, Woodstock IL



Open Monday – Saturday 10am – 5pm

CLOSED SUNDAY

779-220-4945

61 N. Williams St, Crystal Lake, IL



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.

Follow us on our Socials



@ENVIRONMENTAL_DEFENDERS
@GREENREADBOOKSTORE

@ENVIRONMENTALDEFENDERS
@THEGREENREAD