

McLean County Greenways News

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From the Chair

Mike Hall, Chairman, Greenways Advisory Committee

For any plan to be continuously effective tool, it needs to be monitored for compliance and progress and periodically updated and adjusted to maintain its relevance.

The *McLean County Regional Greenways Plan*, first completed and adopted in 1997, was last updated in 2009. A cursory review of the progress on initiatives identified in 2009 strongly supports the need at this time to conduct a review.

Initiatives targeted in the last update for early implementation were:

- Encourage and assist with watershed planning and protection
- Encourage and assist with ecosystem preservation and restoration
- Coordinate and assist with trail extension planning and development
- Strengthen relationships with public and private entities in greenways planning and development
- Promote greenways through public education
- Explore additional land preservation and protection mechanisms

Some progress has been realized on all initiatives with great strides on a good number and additional efforts needed on others.

The *Greenways Advisory Committee* will begin review this fall on the plan's goals, objectives and policies with the intent of identifying pro-active initiatives that can be aggressively implemented in the near future.

Even though it is well represented by governmental and non-governmental organizations involved in planning, parks, recreation, cycling, running, walking and environmental conservation, the *Committee* believes there are other groups and individuals in the community with greenway interests that it wishes to invite and participate in this review.

If you or your favorite group is interested in becoming involved, please contact Rick Nolan, Staff Liaison, McLean County Regional Planning Commission or myself.

Mike Hall

Administrative Director, *Parklands Foundation*

Chairman, McLean County Greenways Advisory Committee

Member Feature: Friends of Kickapoo Creek

Friends of Kickapoo Creek (FOKC) was an original member of the McLean County Greenways Advisory Committee. The organization is concerned with preserving animal and plant habitat and water conservation within the Kickapoo Creek watershed. Members of FOKC work with neighbors, communities, and other conservation associations to preserve stewardship of the creek through advocacy, education and monitoring. The organization works to preserve creek-related recreational opportunities such as fishing, kayaking, hunting, wading, bird watching and photography.

The Kickapoo Creek and its tributaries are home to a wide variety of animals and plants including: small mouth bass, spiny softshell turtles, yellow sandshell and fatmuckel mussels, bullfrogs, red fox, mink, wood ducks and great blue herons. Streamside woodlands contain giant cottonwood and sycamore trees among others.

The organization also advocates for responsible use and maintenance of septic systems that may affect the watershed. FOKC also supports the responsible use of fertilizers, pesticides and other lawn and farm chemicals. For more information on FOKC check out their website at www.kickapooecreek.org.

Prairie State Conservation Coalition Receives Grant

Prairie State Conservation Coalition (PSCC) of Illinois received a \$48,000 grant from the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation in Chicago. The grant will be used to support the production of I-View, the Geographic Information System (GIS) spatial database of all permanently protected conservation lands in Illinois.

Dr. Angelo Capparella, Associate Professor of Zoology at Illinois State University, will be program coordinator. Dr. Capparella is also a member of the McLean County Greenways Advisory Committee and is a PSCC board member.

I-View will enhance the ability of private and public conservation organizations to establish an interconnected system of healthy and protected lands and waters. With I-View, future land acquisition and current management can be coordinated across ownership categories or the first time at a landscape ecological scale.

The PSCC can be contacted at PSCC@prariestateconservation.org.

Conservation Youth/Family Day

Prairielands Preservation Foundation held its Fifth Annual Conservation Youth/Family Day at COMLARA Park at Evergreen Lake on Sat., June 20 from 9:00 a.m. to noon. McLean County Soil and Water Conservation District was also a co-sponsor.

There were several “learning” stations with interactive exhibits and hands-on activities. Some of the exhibits featured water testing, archery, farm animals, and information on natural habitat.

Learn more about the Foundation at prairielandpreservationfoundation.org.



Friends Distribute Updated Trail Maps

The Friends of Constitution Trail have updated and printed several thousand maps of the Constitution Trail for public distribution. This is the second edition of an update of the map over the past four years. It continues to be a popular companion piece for outdoor enthusiasts, local residents and visitors to the area. Maps can be picked up at sponsor locations, Bloomington and Normal Parks and Recreation departments and McLean County Regional Planning Commission offices.

Please check with the Friends at constitutiontrail.org for other locations where maps are available.

Light the Night is September 3

The Town of Normal and Connect Transit will again be sponsoring “Light the Night” on Thursday, Sept. 3 from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. in Uptown Normal. This is an opportunity for bicyclists of all ages and skill levels to learn more about bike safety and information on all things bikes.

Volunteers will be available to fit bikes with night reflectors (while supplies last) and perform basic preventive maintenance (air pressure tire checks, seat and handle bar safety, etc.) Other exhibitors will be on hand promoting various products and information that interests the cycling community.

More information can be obtained from the Town of Normal website at www.normal.org.

National Trails Day

Sugar Grove Nature Center was a local host for National Trails Day on June 6. Various activities included seminars by Center staff, free hikes on the Nature Center trail, nature exhibits and information booths. Several hundred people attended the events.

EAC Half Marathon Set

The Ecology Action Center's "Fleet Feet Sports We Care Twin Cities Half Marathon" will be held Saturday, Sept. 26 at 7:00 a.m. at Eastview Christian Church located at 1500 Airport Road in Normal. Saturday events include the half-marathon which starts at 7:00 a.m. followed by a 10 K run.



The weekend will also include a 5K run and kids half mile "fun run" on Friday, Sept. 25. Those events will be at GE Park in Bloomington located at 1705 GE Road. The Friday events will begin at 5:30 p.m.

Proceeds for all events help support the work of the Ecology Action Center in Normal. For more information contact the EAC at their website at www.ecologyactioncenter.org.

East Central Illinois Water Meeting

A July 24 meeting was held at Davis Lodge at Lake Bloomington to discuss regional water issues. The meeting included members of the Mahomet Aquifer Consortium and the Regional Water Planning Committee. Topics and presentations included: "2015 Water Supply Updated Report", "Action Items for the Regional Water Planning Supply Committee", "How Your Water Supply Plans Fits With Comprehensive Planning", "Getting Your Community Involved With Your Water Plan", "Bloomington's Water Supply Efforts", and the "Source Water Protection Program."

Local presenters at the meeting were Rick Twait (Bloomington Water Department), Vasu Pinnamaraju (McLean County Regional Planning Commission), Dr. Joan Brehm (ISU Sociology Department) and Jackie Kraft (McLean County Soil and Water). Attendees also toured the Bloomington Water Plant and the T-3 water and conservation site at COMLARA Park.

