

MCLEAN COUNTY GREENWAYS NEWS

WINTER 2015: VOLUME III, ISSUE I

Member Highlight...Friends of Constitution Trail

The Friends of Constitution Trail is represented on the McLean County Greenways Advisory Committee. The “Friends” work for expansion and beautification of the trail. Through membership dues, donations, and grants the organization assists in implementing various trail improvements like drinking fountains, signage, benches, landscaping and shelters.

Another goal of the group is promoting expansion of the trail into as many neighborhoods as possible to make the trail not only a recreational option but an alternative transportation option. Thanks to the efforts of the “Friends”, the trail stretches more than 30 miles throughout the Bloomington-Normal metro area.

The “Friends” have provided high quality bicycle racks to many local organizations and has made monetary contributions toward updating the Constitution Trail map. The group has contributed to the development of the City of Bloomington’s planned Bicycle Master Plan as well as participating in the McLean County Wheelers’ bike giveaway program.

They have also help fund the planting of over 45 trees along the trail and regularly promote various initiatives such as the Annual Bike Rodeo that teaches child bicycle safety and the Town of Normal’s “Light the Night” event.



*Image courtesy of
www.constitutiontrail.org*

Winter Trail Use Counts

Town of Normal and City of Bloomington staff along with numerous volunteers continued the ongoing effort of conducting Constitution Trail counts on February 7-14. This initiative assists the municipalities in the uses of the trail in winter, spring, summer and fall and by whom. Both the Town and City use the information to implement current and future bike and pedestrian plans.

Volunteers are assigned to various locations around the trail and count usage in two-hour increments. The information is then used to calculate usage at various locations by time of day, gender, and type (walking, running, cycling, rollerblading, etc.). Anyone interested in taking part in future trail counts should contact Mercy Davison at the Town of Normal at mdavison@normal.org.

Maple Sirup “Experience” Tours



*Photo courtesy of
www.sugargrovenaturcenter.org*

learn how Native Americans and early settlers collected and prepared sap. Interactive events are also planned which include learning how the sirup-making process is done, and how to tap a tree. Attendees will have an opportunity to sample a variety of treats made with the local maple sirup including candies, cookies, fudge and more.

The Sugar Grove Nature Center in Funks Grove will again be conducting Maple Sirup Experience Tours on March 7 at 9:30 a.m.; noon and 2:30 p.m. Registration forms are available on the Nature Center website at www.sugargrovenaturecenter.org. The cost of the event is \$5.00 (adults) and \$3.00 (children) for nature center members and \$7.00 (adults) and \$3.00 (children) for non-members.

Registration and pre-payment is required.

Late winter is the time of year when buckets decorate the sugar maples throughout Funk’s Grove. This is a chance to taste the “sweet water” from the trees and

Illinois Bike Summit Date Announced

The Illinois Bike Summit will return to Champaign’s I-Hotel on the University of Illinois campus on October 28.

The event drew over 300 bike enthusiasts in 2014. The steering committee will soon be announcing summit content and will be launching a registration website. Target audiences for the event are government agency staffs as well as bicycle advocates, consultants and elected officials.



Logo courtesy of www.bikelib.org

Professional engineers and planners who attend will be given professional educational credits. The summit will return to the Town of Normal in 2016. The event is sponsored by the League of Illinois Bicyclists and Champaign County Bikes.

Sustainable Living Expo Is April 11



The Illinois Sustainable Living and Wellness Expo is schedule for April 11 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Shirk Center on the campus of Illinois Wesleyan University. The event celebrates creating healthy communities by promoting green alternatives and embracing services that promote health and healing. For information contact the Ecology Action Center at (309) 454-3169.

Photo courtesy of www.islwe.org

Household Hazardous Waste Update

The Ecology Action Center (EAC) has been given the green light to prepare for household hazardous waste collection events in the fall of 2015 and 2017. The City of Bloomington, Town of Normal, and McLean County will be the primary funding sources for both events under a recently-approved multi-year agreement.

The EAC is the designated solid waste agency for Bloomington-Normal. Traditionally, solid waste collection events had been coordinated with the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency from 2003 through 2007. Significant turnout from previous events has demonstrated a need for more regularly-scheduled collections.

Because of funding limitations, materials collected will be limited to McLean County residents only with only residential waste being accepted. Business and industrial waste will not be accepted. Please contact the EAC at (309) 454-3169 for more information.

Chair Steps Aside

Michael Brown, Chair of the McLean County Greenways Advisory Committee, has decided to vacate the chairmanship to concentrate on the increasing activities and responsibilities at the Ecology Action Center in Normal. Michael is the Executive Director of the EAC. We thank Michael for serving as Chair the last couple of years and the articles he contributed to this publication. He will continue to be involved in the Committee as primary EAC representative. A new Chair will be announced soon.

Greenways Information

If you are interested in becoming a member, or are interested in attending McLean County Greenways Advisory Committee meetings, please contact Rick Nolan at rnolan@mcplan.org or (309) 828-4331 ext. 26.