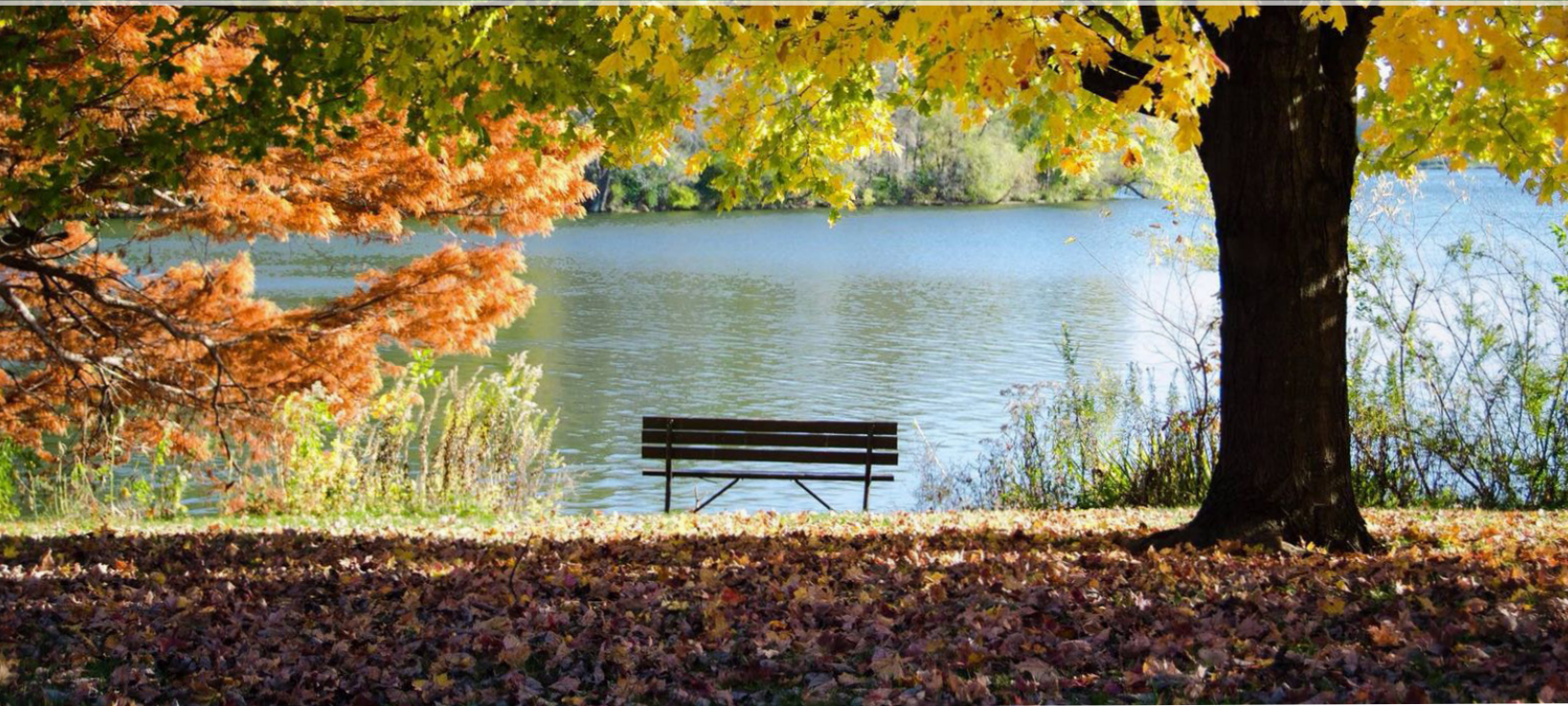


# Greenways Newsletter

*The McLean County  
Greenways project  
connects residents  
with natural areas  
and improves their  
quality of life.*



ISSUE 1, FALL 2018



## Message From the Chair

**Moraine View State Park**  
**Photo Source: Vinay Devari**

The McLean County Regional Greenways Plan was developed over 20 years ago “to connect McLean County residents with natural areas and improve their quality of life.” Today, the Greenways Advisory Committee consists of over 25 members representing organizations who are dedicated to this mission. While each organization has its own mission, all want to share the corridors of land and water connecting greenways and people so they appreciate the diversity of habitats, wildlife and resources. With the launch of our new website, we are making it easier for residents to discover the Greenways around them and

learn about those green spaces with trails or paths that provide places to relax and enjoy nature as well as offer alternative transportation routes and recreational opportunities. We hope citizens will take the time to go to the MCRPC’s website at [mcplan.org/greenways](http://mcplan.org/greenways) and explore many of the greenways we have in McLean County.

We hope you will enjoy exploring the new website and McLean County!

Deanna Frautschi,  
Greenways Advisory Committee  
Chair

“I’m excited to see that the McLean County Greenways Committee is seeing a resurgence of new energy and enthusiasm. This renewed effort is mirrored by the new website launch, which makes information on our local greenways much more accessible to local residents.”

**Michael Brown**  
Ecology Action Center Executive Director  
and Immediate Past Chair of the  
Greenways Advisory Committee

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Website**

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## McLean County Greenways Launches New Website

[mcplan.org/greenways](http://mcplan.org/greenways)

Constitution Trail  
Photo Source: Michael Brown

As part of MCRPC's new website launch this summer, Greenways webpage got a big make over. This new page is organized into five areas of information for ease of access: Explore, Events, News, Greenways Advisory Committee and Plan Progress.

Each area will be refreshed when any of its elements are updated, so please check back frequently for new details.

### EXPLORE

In this section, you will find many resources to help you explore the natural areas of McLean County. The interactive map area, StoryMap, links you to our tour of 22 (and growing) Greenways sites, including their locations, details of what you'll find there and associated websites. The Constitution Trail map shows the 45 miles of trail that

weave throughout Bloomington-Normal and McLean County. This interactive map also includes trail-oriented amenities such as trail heads, parking, drinking fountains, and parking lots. If birds are your passion and you want to see all there is to see in the county, be sure to check out the John Wesley Powell (JWP) Audubon Society's Bird Checklist. This section also includes hard-to-find information such as places to rent canoes and kayaks and places that offer additional training.

### EVENTS

This section highlights events by season hosted by Greenways partner organizations. There are many areas in McLean County that have breathtaking vistas in fall and winter. Be informed about upcoming events and check these areas out.

### NEWSLETTERS

The Greenways Advisory Committee will be publishing at least two newsletters per year like this one. These newsletters are intended to highlight our greenways, provide relevant updates on the Greenways plan and help you better enjoy McLean County Greenways.

### GREENWAYS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Find more information about our partner organizations along with links to their websites and how they all work cohesively to protect and promote the natural environment at the ecosystem level.

### PLAN PROGRESS

The first Regional Greenways Plan was created in late 1998. Many natural areas are protected and are now made accessible

to the public as a direct result of this plan. This section features the plan as a living and breathing document that gives you more specifics on its implementation progress.

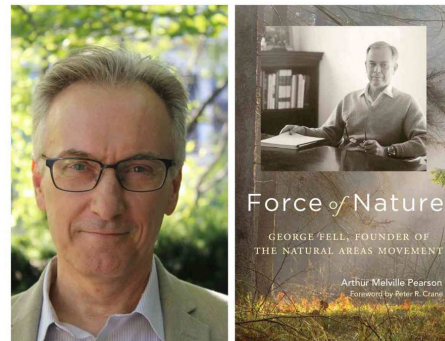
## GREENWAYS CONFERENCE

The Greenways Advisory Committee hosts a conference every other fall. These conferences spotlight our local natural areas and ongoing conservation efforts in order to help improve residents' quality of life. We feature the program topics and speakers from our 2017 conference and will include details in the future on the next conference, which will take place in fall 2019. This is another area that you will want to keep an eye on.

## BOOK TALK - ARTHUR PEARSON

Arthur Pearson will give a talk about his recently published book, "Force of Nature: George Fell, Founder of the Natural Areas Movement."

"Efforts to preserve wild places in the United States began with the allure of scenic grandeur: Yosemite, Yellowstone, the Grand Canyon. But what about the many significant natural sites too small or fragile to qualify as state or federal parks? George Fell was determined to save these places, too—prairie remnants, upland forests, sedge meadows, ocean beaches, desert canyons, caves and gorges, and the full spectrum of other habitats essential to biological diversity. Force of Nature reveals how a failed civil servant, with few assets apart from his tenacity and vision, initiated the natural areas movement. In the boom years following World War II, as undeveloped lands were being mined, drained, or bulldozed, Fell transformed a loose band of ecologists into The Nature Conservancy, drove the passage of the influential Illinois Nature Preserves Act, and helped spark allied local and national conservation organizations in the United States and beyond."



**Who:** Mr. Pearson is the Director of Chicago Program for the Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation, where he guides the Foundation's support for land conservation and the arts.

**When:** Monday, November 5, at 7:00 p.m.

**Where:** Center for Natural Sciences building room C101, Illinois Wesleyan University, Bloomington,

**Cost:** Free and open to the public.

Co-sponsored by the JWP Audubon Society of Bloomington-Normal and the Illinois Wesleyan University Environmental Studies

## Greenways needs your photos!

As you're out and about this fall and winter going to sites on this website, we would love to see photos of you, friends and/or families exploring the places you went and showing us what you saw. Photos will be judged on the following criteria:

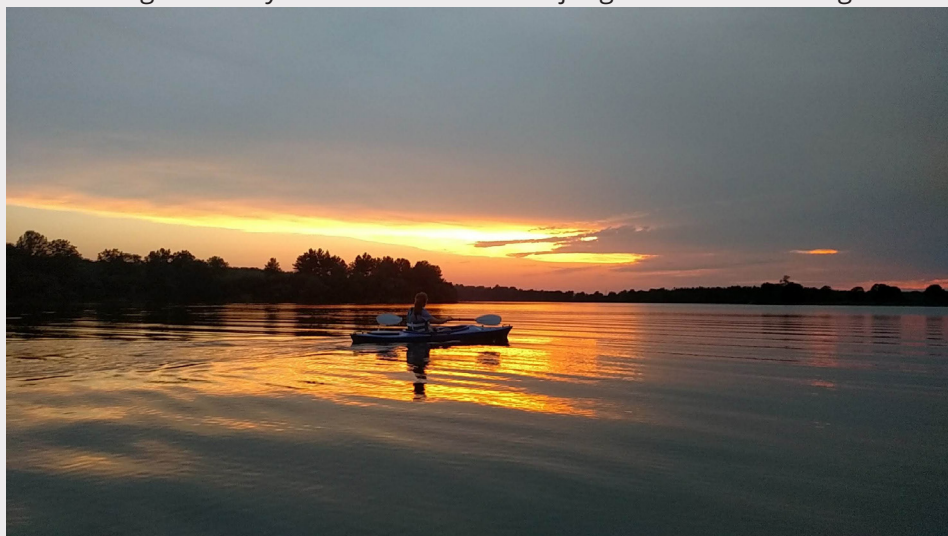
- Demonstrating use of the Greenway
- Capturing the essence of the site.

**BONUS!** Just to entice you to follow through, MCRPC is offering **four \$50 gift cards** one in each category identified below. The Greenways Advisory Committee will vote on the best of the fall and winter entries.

Categories include

1. Landscape
2. People using greenway
3. Wildlife (animals or insects)
4. Best of Greenways photo

Good luck and enjoy exploring.

















**Lake Evergreen**  
**Photo Source: Michael Brown**



You can send your photos to [mcrpc@mcplan.org](mailto:mcrpc@mcplan.org) by February 28, 2019 and we will review them for inclusion on this new Greenways website. Don't forget to include your name, the name of the Greenway site you photographed, your email address and phone number.



## McLean County Greenways Amenities Checklist

|   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Angler's Lake Nature Preserve               |   | ●   |   |   |   | ●   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Comlara Park                                | ●   | ●   | ●   | ●   | ●   | ●   | ●   | ●   | ●   | ●   | ●   | ●   | ●   |   |
| Constitution Trail North & South Trailheads | ●   |   |   |   | ●   |   | ●   |   |   | ●   |   |   |   |   |
| Ewing Park                                  | ●   | ●   |   |   | ●   |   | ●   |   |   |   |   | ●   |   |   |
| Fransen Nature Area                         |   |   |   |   |   | ●   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Funks Grove Nature Preserve                 |   | ●   |   |   | ●   |   | ●   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Heartland Community College Greenspace      |   |   |   |   | ●   | ●   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Heyworth Centennial Park                    | ●   |   |   |   | ●   | ●   | ●   | ●   |   | ●   |   | ●   |   | ●   |
| Hidden Creek Nature Sanctuary               |   |   |   |   | ●   |   |   |   |   | ●   |   |   |   |   |
| Howard Virgin Timber/<br>James A Bane Park  |   |   |   |   | ●   | ●   | ●   |   |   |   | ●   |   |   |   |
| Kenneth I Schroeder Wildlife Sanctuary      |   | ●   |   |   | ●   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Kickapoo Park                               |   |   |   |   | ●   | ●   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Lake Bloomington Parks                      |   | ●   |   |   | ●   | ●   | ●   | ●   |   |   |   | ●   |   |   |
| M.J. Rhymer Family Nature Preserve          |   |   |   |   | ●   |   |   |   |   | ●   |   |   |   |   |
| Mackinaw River State Fish & Wildlife Area   |   |   |   |   | ●   | ●   | ●   | ●   | ●   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Merwin Nature Preserve                      |   | ●   |   |   | ●   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Moraine View State Park                     | ●   | ●   | ●   | ●   | ●   | ●   | ●   | ●   | ●   | ●   |   | ●   |   |   |
| Simeon H. West County Park                  |   |   |   |   | ●   |   | ●   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Saybrook Habitat Areas                      |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | ●   |   |   |   |   |   |
| The Grove Park                              |   | ●   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Tipton Park (N. Entrance)                   | ●   |   |   |   | ●   | ●   | ●   |   |   |   |   | ●   |   | ●   |
| Weston Cemetery Prairie Nature Preserve     |   |   |   |   | ●   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |



### #1. FUNKS GROVE/SUGAR GROVE NATURE CENTER

As leaves start to change, Sugar Grove Nature Center is a great place to hike, especially because of the abundance of maple trees there, which are much more colorful than the dominant oak/hickory community found in many other natural areas.

**Funks Grove Nature Center**  
Photo Source: Sugar Grove Nature Center

### #2. MACKINAW

While the air temperature is getting cooler, it is a great time to canoe or kayak the Mackinaw. After dropping to levels too shallow to navigate during the heat of the summer, it usually returns in fall to a very manageable level. Currently the US Geological Survey Stream Gauge shows the level at slightly less than one foot deep, which is perfect for a small boat like a canoe or kayak.

ParkLands Foundation has a canoe launch at the Sweeney property. with a parking lot and then just a short walk to carry your canoe or kayak down to the water. After a few hours of easy paddling downstream, you can take out at the launch at the Dungey Preserve. Of course, this requires two cars, one left behind at your end destination.

An alternative is to put in at one location, like the Sweeney Preserve, paddle upstream for a while (relatively easy with this level of water) and then turn around and float nice and easy



**Mackinaw River**  
Photo Source: Pantagraph

downstream back to your car. But be sure to wear PFDs and bring a set of dry clothes in a dry bag in case you get wet so you don't get too cold.

Once it snows, a hike or, better yet, cross-country skiing at the ParkLands Foundation Merwin Preserve is very enjoyable. The gentle hills through the oak/hickory woodlands and prairies are quite perfect and beautiful for this activity. Birds are always active at this place year round.

ContentContributor: Michael Brown, EAC Executive Director







## Greenways Subcommittee Updates

New committees formed to focus on the multiple aspects of Greenways

Moraine View State Park  
Photo Source: Vinay Devari

The Greenways Program is structured with three sub-committees that focus on Mission and Awareness, Goals and Objectives, and Education and Outreach. This structure was refreshed this spring and the sub-committees have been getting a lot done since then.

### MISSION & AWARENESS

The Mission and Awareness sub-committee has been working along with MCRPC staff as they planned the look of the new organizational website. This sub-committee suggested a structure and content for the Greenways Program section on the website. The tools collected on the site provide a single location where interested residents and visitors can find an array of resources related to McLean County Greenways. The sub-committee decided on these by putting themselves in the shoes of interested residents and visitors. An overarching interest among

the sub-committee members has always been to provide access to as many people as possible, including those with mobility challenges or very narrow or wide-ranging interests. Features in the Greenways Program section of the website are detailed on page 2.

### EDUCATION & OUTREACH

The Education and Outreach sub-committee has been looking into how they can support schools' efforts to teach required curriculum at appropriate Greenways sites within a reasonable distance from given schools. The recently passed Bike Walk Education in Schools Act, HB 4799, mandates education in public school grades K-8 that covers safe ways to walk and bike to school. The sub-committee wants to connect the county schools to the Active Transportation Alliance which has developed curriculum for this Act.

Within their Outreach focus, the group is making strides to improve the general educational value of our green spaces. One idea that the group is exploring is to install signs at various Greenways sites that have geological importance. The first signs that have been developed for placement at Prairie Vista Golf Course and The Den at Fox Creek Golf Course Moraine View State Park explain how end moraines were formed by glaciers at these locations. Other geological features will be explored at other sites and a self-guided tour may also be offered.

## GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The Goals and Objectives sub-committee has been taking a deep look at the Regional Greenways Plan from 2009. They are examining the current status of planned work, looking closely at each published goal and objective to measure progress toward each. The status of each goal and objective is reflected in the Greenways section of MCRPC's website.

### The following tasks are a direct result of Greenways Planning

- Completed the update of McLean County Regional Greenways Plan originally published in April, 1997.
- Facilitated implementation of Historic Route 66 Bikeway

- Facilitated local erosion control and stormwater ordinances.
- Completion of Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) studies for Lake Bloomington and Evergreen Lake.

### Key Publications and Outreach Efforts

- Hosted four greenways conferences between 2009 and 2017 to provide information on greenways activities throughout the county and the state including trails, stream buffers, detention basins, nature opportunities, and greenways practices.
- Published over 20 newsletters with greenways-related news, events and updates

as well as key topics such as Sensible Growth, Farmland Preservation, Conservation Subdivisions, Preserving Urban Waterways, History of the Constitution Trail.

- Published "Guide to McLean County Greenways and Trails." This brochure features McLean County trails, public recreation and natural areas in McLean County. Distributed to local recreational agencies and businesses throughout Bloomington-Normal.
- Tabletop exhibit on Significant Watersheds in McLean County which highlights significant and endangered watersheds along with measures to protect watersheds.

## Greenways Advisory Committee

**Deanna Frautschi, Chairperson**  
Illinois Grand Prairie Master Naturalist

**Meg Anderson**  
Friends of the Constitution Trail

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Sociology Department, Illinois State University

**Michael Brown**  
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**Philip Dick**  
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**Patrick Dullard**  
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**George Farnsworth**  
The Nature Conservancy

**Angela Funk**  
Sugar Grove Nature Center

**Vasudha P. Gadhiraaju**  
McLean County Regional Planning Commission

**Sue and Chip Hendricks**  
Prairielands Preservation Foundation

**Luke Hohulin**  
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**Katherine Sawyer**  
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**Randy Stein**  
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**Drake Zimmerman**  
Friends of Kickapoo Creek





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Greenways are corridors of land and water that connect places and people in McLean County. These open spaces are located within natural or man-made areas and protect habitats, wildlife, and resources. They often contain trails or paths for alternative transportation, offer recreational opportunities, and add to the quality of life in our county.



*Deanna Frautschi*

**Flicker in tree at Comlara Park  
Photo Source: Deanna Frautschi**

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**Michael Gorman**  
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**Jim Fruin**  
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**Mary Kramp**  
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**Carl Olson**  
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**Linda Olson**  
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**Carl Teichman**  
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