

# Greenways Newsletter

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



## Message From the Chair

Merwin Nature Preserve  
Photo Source: Georgi Baird

McLean County Greenways Committee continues to advocate in 2022!

The McLean County Greenways Advisory Committee (GAC) has continued to meet via zoom calls on a bi-monthly basis throughout 2020-2022, as well as holding bi-monthly Executive Committee meetings to expedite projects and improve communications. Much work was undertaken with all the member organizations. During COVID, meetings were held remotely with the support of the McLean County Regional Planning Commission (MCRPC) staff.

Given the activities undertaken by the GAC as well as the events happening on our county's Greenways this year, the GAC felt it was time to

reinitiate newsletters on a seasonal (spring, summer, fall, winter) basis.

The GAC provides advisement to and acts as a coordinating body for the McLean County Regional Planning Commission (MCRPC), the Ecology Action Center, the Parks and Recreation departments (City of Bloomington, Town of Normal, and McLean County), Friends of the Constitution Trail, Friends of Kickapoo Creek, the John Wesley Powell Audubon Society, Illinois Prairie Community Foundation, Sugar Grove Nature Center, Illinois State University, The Nature Conservancy, Bloomington-Normal Water Reclamation District, McLean County Wheelers and Prairielands Preservation Foundation. Its goals are to enhance use of

McLean County Greenways, act as an umbrella organization, and to update and support the [McLean County Greenways Plan](#).

Check out the McLean County Greenways renovated website! ([www.mcplan.org/greenways](http://www.mcplan.org/greenways)) website has been updated with input from all the GAC member organizations. All sections of the Greenways webpage have been updated and newcomers as well as old-timers will find lots of new information about our county's most valuable outdoor recreational resources at their fingertips.

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## Message From The Chair (cont'd)

The GAC has also created a Facebook page for the McLean County Greenways. ([Greenways Facebook Page](#)) This has proven to be a quicker way to post photos of the Greenways and to encourage residents and visitors to take advantage of what the Greenways have to offer.

The GAC spent some time this year surveying its members and soliciting input for improving the GAC's ability to fulfill its mission.

The GAC mission statement and purposes have been reviewed and updated with the renewed support of all its member organizations. Over the next few months, I plan to meet with the Parks and Recreation agencies of the Town, the City, and the County. My goal is to help each of those agencies learn about GAC and the role it is playing as umbrella advisory committee, as well as getting feedback and suggestions from those agencies. If you haven't heard from me yet,

please drop me a line so we can get to know each other better!

Mike Doherty, GAC  
Chairperson



Lake Evergreen

Photo Source: Michael Brown

## News From Member Organizations

**Audubon Club** adds value and activities to the Greenways

The John Wesley Powell Chapter of the National Audubon Society worked hard to reach a broad cross-section of the community with bird-related opportunities in 2022. In addition to the traditional bird walks on Saturday mornings at Ewing Park in Bloomington during spring migration, JWP coordinated bird walks at ParkLands' Merwin Nature Preserve and at the former Girl Scout camp on Lake Bloomington. Over the summer, the Town of Normal promoted bird walks held by JWP at Maxwell Park and at Hidden Creek Park as part of National Parks and Recreation Month. JWP also coordinated the first-ever amateur bird photography

exhibit at the Normal Public Library and hosted several bird presentations at Illinois Wesleyan University.

With fall migration at hand, JWP will lead several bird walks throughout September and October at a diverse array of local parks. Keep an eye on the JWP Facebook page and website ([www.jwpaudubon.com](http://www.jwpaudubon.com)) for details!

**Town of Normal** expands birding and pollinator habitat along Greenways

The Town of Normal continues to improve bird and pollinator habitat throughout 2022 at several of its public parks. At Underwood Park, Town staff installed interpretive signage at the prairie adjacent to the trail and permitted local

Girl Scouts to install bird houses along the perimeter. The Maxwell Park disc golf improvement was modified to maintain more of the native shrubs that have served as important nesting habitat. The restoration project at Hidden Creek progressed, with Town staff adding native shrubs and flowering trees.

In May 2022, State Farm announced a grant of \$75,000 to assist the Town with a bird sanctuary project at the "Y Intersection" of the Constitution Trail adjacent to the Connie Link Amphitheatre. The project will include a water feature and native plants near the existing Allers shelter. Look for construction in 2023!

## News From Member Organizations (cont'd)

**Parklands Foundation** held its 5th annual fund-raiser bike ride along the Mackinaw River valley. This year, their efforts resulted in 270 cyclists, which was a record. Great promotional effort combined with support from other area clubs paid off. Parklands held their annual meeting on September 11 and will be welcoming in their new president, Frank Sanders.

**Friends of Constitution Trail:** "Friends" as they are known, worked with the Lake Run Club, the Town of Normal, and the City of Bloomington to memorialize Trail advocate Meg Anderson with a "Meg's Miles" sign and mile-marker posts along Constitution Trail this summer. "Friends" has also updated their map of Constitution Trail which is available online and in print form, and will soon be updating the large

outdoor maps that are posted alongside Constitution Trail.

The Friends partnered with Ecology Action Center's Tree Corps to plant 50 trees along the Route 66 Branch at Funks Grove in May. Another 50 will be planted October 28. Watch for volunteer sign up.

"Friends" also funded the purchase of Route 66 Bike Route signage and partnered with Bloomington and Normal to install the signs. The Route is now marked throughout the Twin Cities.

**Sugar Grove Nature Center** continues to offer an array of outdoor and nature-education activities for adults and families: blacksmithing demonstrations, workturning, bee and pollinator programs, youth activity stations, and an upcoming Guided Tree Walk on Nature Trails Day

**McLean County Wheelers** cycling club: With lots of group rides scheduled ever week on Constitution Trail and also between Greenways locations, this venerable cycling club, celebrating its 41st year, is now more popular than ever. The club now boasts 1200 followers on Facebook, its own Instagram page, and over 200 official members. Rides are led weekly by knowledgeable cyclists in-town, around town, and out-of-town along Constitution Trail and to visit other Greenways sites in McLean County.

**Ecology Action Center:** During the spring of 2022, thanks to the quick response of Ecology Action Center director Michael Brown, over 1100 trees were obtained for planting along county Greenways.

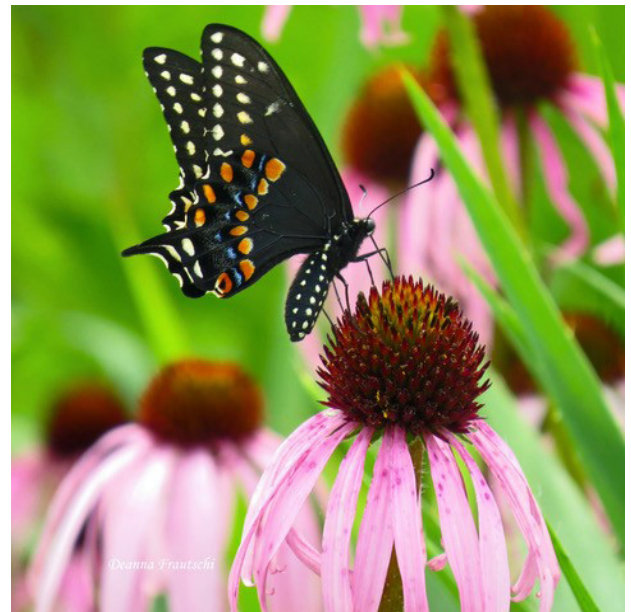


Photo Source: Deanna Frautschi

# Greenways Advisory Committee - Current Representatives

Jon Branham

*Planning, City of Bloomington*

Joan Brehm

*Sociology Department, Illinois State University*

Michael Brown

*Ecology Action Center*

Clare Baez

*Bloomington Public Library*

Jake Callahan

*Bloomington & Normal Water Reclamation District*

Angelo Capparella

*Biology Department, Illinois State University*

Jessica Chambers

*Illinois State University*

Michelle Cope

*Bloomington Public Library*

Douglas Damery

*Parks & Recreation, Town of Normal*

Mimi Davis

*Bloomington Public Library*

Mercy Davison

*Planning, Town of Normal*

Philip Dick

*Building & Zoning, McLean County*

Michael Doherty

*McLean County Wheelers*

Patrick Dullard

*Friends of the Constitution Trail*

George Farnsworth

*The Nature Conservancy*

Deanna Frautschi

*Illinois Grand Prairie Master Naturalist*

Angela Funk

*Sugar Grove Nature Center*

Sue and Chip Hendricks

*Prairielands Preservation Foundation*

Luke Hohulin

*Highway Department, McLean County*

Dominic Kallas

*Engineering, City of Bloomington*

Gene Kotlinski

*Parks & Recreation, Town of Normal*

Jacqueline Kraft

*McLean County Soil & Water Conservation District*

Raymond Lai

*McLean County Regional Planning Commission*

David Lamb

*Parks & Recreation, City of Bloomington*

Katie McShane

*McLean County Regional Planning Commission*

Gretchen Monti

*John Wesley Powell Audubon Society*

Jeanne Moonan

*Normal Public Library*

Robert Nelson

*Illinois State University*

Ken Newgren

*Illinois Grand Prairie Master Naturalist, Sugar Grove Nature Center*

Ryan Otto

*Public Works & Engineering Department, Town of Normal*

Nick Pershey

*Horticulture Department, Illinois State University*

Marcia Rossi

*Naturalist*

Frank Sanders

*Parklands Foundation*

Katherine Sawyer

*Naturalist*

Kimberly Smith

*Planning, City of Bloomington*

Michael Steffa

*Parks & Recreation, McLean County*

Tim Ervin

*Bloomington & Normal Water Reclamation District*

Glen Wetterow

*Planning, City of Bloomington*

Drake Zimmerman

*Friends of Kickapoo Creek*



Photo Source: Deanna Frautschi



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