

INDIAN CREEK NEWSLETTER

May 2011

On the web at <http://www.frontiernet.net/~indiancreek>

Contact us by email at indiancreeknews@hotmail.com



They're Back!

If you can, make time for a stroll through our trail. You might need mud boots, but it's a great year for the bluebells!

Frightening News about cell phone pictures

Smartphone picture uploads can reveal the location of your children's home, school, and play areas. It's a new and frightening threat to parents. "The full risk is even an unknown to many internet crime experts, ... never seen private information shared so quickly in such an unknown manner." "...the hidden smartphone data is today's biggest risk online."

If you have children or grandchildren you NEED to watch this. Did you know this could happen from taking pictures on the blackberry or cell phone?

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N2vARzvWxwY>

Also visit <http://tinyurl.com/smartphonerisks> to read much more on this investigation.

Towanda 4-H



The Towanda 4-H Club will meet at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, May 3rd at the Towanda Community Center. At this meeting we will be having our Learn and Fun activities such as sewing projects, record keeping, cooking 101, etc. We will also be working on the first part of our mile ditch cleaning. Look for more details to come. Our Juinor Leader will be Miranda Reginer. Amber Conder, Alaina Domkuski, Jenny Glasscock, Miranda Reginer, and Megan Schultz will be doing talks, and Arianna Scheltens, Mackenzie Craft, Adam Craft, and Katie Sandage will be doing demonstrations. Bringing refreshments is M. Kraft and the Reginers. Mackenzie Kraft is in charge of recreation. For more information, contact Kathy Schultz at 728-2137 or Jeanie Wager at 728-2852.

Towanda 4-H met on Tuesday, April 5th at Femley Hall on Illinois State University campus. The group was exposed to the different facets of entomology. The group enjoyed feeding some of the bugs and seeing different sizes of specimens along with lots of information.

McLean County Produced Less Waste in 2010 While Increasing Recycling



McLean County's total waste generation showed a decline for a second year in a row during 2010. A total of 214,886 tons of municipal solid waste was generated in McLean County last year. This amount is a 5.9 percent decrease from the 228,306 tons of waste generated in 2009 and a 17.8 percent decrease from the 261,441 tons generated in 2008, which was the highest waste generation rate in the past 13 years.

In contrast to the 2009 recycling rate decline, 2010 saw an increase of 2.4 percent in waste recycled county-wide. Of the 214,886 tons of waste generated last year, 80,541 tons were recycled putting the county recycling rate at 37.5 percent, on track towards the McLean County Solid Waste Plan goal of recycling 40 percent of municipal solid waste generated.

The Ecology Action Center annually collects data on the amount of municipal solid waste generated and recycled for all of McLean County. These figures are then reported to the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency to calculate statewide statistics.

Information on residential recycling, recycling of non-traditional items and information on recycling or disposal of household hazardous wastes may be found at www.ecologyactioncenter.org or by calling 309-454-3169.

The Ecology Action Center is a not-for-profit walk-in information and environmental education center with a mission to inspire and assist residents of McLean County in creating, strengthening, and preserving a healthy environment.

Legion News

Towanda American Legion will have a breakfast on Sunday May 1st from 7:30 to 11:00. Breakfast will include scrambled eggs, egg casserole, sausage, bacon, hash brown potatoes, biscuits and gravy, pancakes, fruit and drink for \$8. Carryouts are available.

There will be another breakfast on Sunday May 8th in conjunction with the Red Carpet Corridor. Same times and menu.

The American Legion will have a steak, shrimp or steak/shrimp combo dinner on Friday May 13th from 5:30 to 7:30. Dinner will include rib eye steak, shrimp or combo, baked potato, salad, roll, dessert and drink for \$10. Carryouts are available.

We are continuing to collect donations for our troops overseas. If you know of a service person you would like to receive a package, please let us know. We appreciate your continued support of the Legion and our troops.

Towanda HCE



The Towanda Home & Community Education group will be meeting on May 9 at 7:00 pm at the Towanda Community Building. Hostesses for the evening are Lena Harper and Lu Payton. The program will be "FOOD SUBSTITUTIONS" given by LaVonne Cunningham. The Fact Find will be "Fighting Arthritis: 10 foods that help and hurt".

For information about this meeting or the Towanda HCE, please call Robin Pearson, 815-579-1650 or Cindy Kelley, 663-4796.

Bent Tree Lane Resurfacing

McLean County Asphalt plans to start work resurfacing Bent Tree Lane on Tuesday, May 17 and Wednesday, May 18. (The date changed because of all the rain.) Milling and prep work will occur on the first day and homeowners will have access. On May 18, priming and asphaltting will be done, so there will be no access between the hours of 7 a.m. and 6 p.m.

Bent Tree homeowners should check their email for any updates.

Towanda Library

Wednesday, May 18 at 5:30 p.m.

Join **Master Gardener**, Helen Leake, as she guides us into a comfort zone for growing our own vegetables in containers. If you are unable or unwilling to have a big garden, you can still enjoy fresh, homegrown veggies.

Friday, May 27 at 10:50 a.m.

Medieval School Assembly: Accompanied by lords and ladies, knights and a dog who likes to read, librarians personally invite students to the library's Summer Reading Program.

May Story Hours

Monday mornings at 10:30 a.m.

May 2.....Bugs! Bugs! Bugs!
May 9Balloon Garden
May 16.....Flowers
May 23Summer Vacations

Library Parking Lot Upgrade

During the first week in May the parking area in front of the library is scheduled to be paved and expanded. Please use the south parking area during this time.

Towanda Busy Bees

Meeting Notes
by Reporter Jacob Bonner



On Tuesday, April 19, the Towanda Busy Bees held their monthly meeting at the Towanda Community Building. Vice President Grace Rients called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm. Craig Morris led the Pledge of Allegiance and Logan Bonner led the 4-H Pledge. The roll call topic this month was favorite rainy day activity. During the business portion of the meeting, Craig Morris gave the treasurers report and Anna Dickerson gave the secretary's report. In new business the club set a date for The Library Clean Up as May 14, 2011. The annual Red Cross Blood Drive will be June 21, 2011 at the Towanda Community Building..

The club has been learning about food pantries and will hold a food drive to benefit the Salvation Army. Information cards will be delivered on Saturday April 30th around the Towanda area, with food pick up on May 7th

This month's program featured guest speaker Tom Fulop, Social Services Director from the Salvation Army. He spoke about the Salvation Army's Red Kettle campaign and other programs the Salvation Army supports. This year, the local bell ringing campaign was one of the few nationally to meet their Red Kettle goal. Money raised locally is used locally for a variety of assistance programs. Some of those programs include the local Safe Harbor Shelter that houses homeless men and women, those in need of assistance for heating bills and even money for gasoline or transportation assistance. The Salvation Army also serves meals each day with the help of many volunteers and runs a food pantry for those in need of meal assistance.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:59 pm.

The Towanda Busy Bees meet the third Tuesday of each month. The next meeting is on Tuesday, May 16th. Membership is open to boys and girls ages 8-18—or Cloverbuds between the ages of 5-7 --everyone is welcome. Please contact Tom and Janet Morris at 664-0360 with questions.

Worthy Quote

"Absence of evidence is not evidence of absence."

Carl Sagan



May 7-8

Flea Market, Area Garage Sales, Crafts, Antiques, Bake Sale, Food and Entertainment at North Park.

Saturday: Lawn mower races at 11:00am on Main St., Call Bryan at 309-728-2733 for information.

Sunday: American Legion Breakfast 7-11am at Legion Hall.

Car show on Old Route 66. Registration: 8am-12pm. Call Jodi at 815-579-

Cattle Bandits Band in North Park at 1pm. (Bring your lawn chairs)

Raffle for Wii or 50/50 drawing; Passport books will be stamped at North Park

Route 66 T-Shirts for sale: \$14-16; Route 66 Hats: \$9, Route 66 Glassware, Jewelry also for sale.

For information call Sharon at 309-728-2169 or Susie at 309-728-2195.

Classifieds

For Hire:

McKenzie Hayes, Age 15, will babysit

Attention Dog Owners of Indian Creek

I am considering submitting a proposal to the neighborhood board regarding the construction of a fenced in dog play area. I am imagining that it would be best somewhere along the perimeter of the soccer field area. I would like to gauge people's interest in this possibility so please email me with any thoughts or ideas. Thanks and happy Spring! Rebecca Russell
rebeccadorothie@gmail.com

Calendar

May

Sun.May 1 - May Day

Thu.-Sun., May 5-8 ~ Towanda Area Garage Sales

Sat.-Sun., May 7-8 ~ Red Carpet Corridor Festival

Wed.May 11 ~ Late Start in Unit 5

Sat.May 14 ~ Recycling pickup in Lamplighter and Towanda

Mon.May 23 ~ 4th July Planning, Community Building, 7:00 p.m.

Tue.May 24 ~ Towanda Area Historical Society, Community Building, 7:00 p.m.

Sat.May 28 ~ Commencements for Unit 5, Coliseum, NCHS @ 2:00 p.m. & NCWHS @ 6:00 p.m.

Mon.May 30 ~ Memorial Day - No School

June

Fri.Jun.3 ~ Last day of school in Unit 5

Towanda Area Historical Society

Planning for June event, update on book progress, and bylaws for the organization will be discussed. The meeting is open to the public.

Towanda Area Spring 2011 GARAGE Sales

Thursday, May 5 through Sunday, May 8, 2011
Days and Hours Vary by Sale / they are listed if known

INDIAN CREEK SUBD.

1) - 10 Bent Tree

Thu. 8-5; Fri. 8-5; Sat. 8-3 Music CDs, movies, electronics, sporting goods and collectibles, clothes, school supplies, books, board games, toys and shoes.

2) - 6 Bent Tree

Fri. 8-5; Sat. 8-3 Furniture, collectibles, pet carriers, small appliances, fishing and camping equipment, tools, game or pool table leaded glass light, home decor, Bose speakers, broad ax, Toro self-propelled lawn mower, dehumidifier

VILLAGE

3) - 107 W Fremont

Friday & Saturday Tools, automotive supplies, rowing exercise machine, child's bike, household items, plants, rhubarb and lots of miscellaneous

4) - 300 S Madison

Thursday - Sunday Lots perennials, potted plants, bottles, glass, baskets, Swayzee fruit jars, jewelry, antiques, collectibles, linens, wooden boxes, Rte 66 memorabilia.

Proceeds from plant sales to benefit the Red Carpet Corridor Committee

5) - 309 E Adams

Fri. 9-4:30; Sat. 8-2; Sun. 9-12 Household items, camping items, toys, hubcaps for semi-truck, kids clothes and lots of miscellaneous

6) - 105 N Madison, Apt.4

Sat. 7-1; Sun. 8-12 Girls clothing 0-18 mo. (some new; all in excellent condition; shoes size 3; matching Winnie the Pooh (WTP) stroller & car seat, WTP high chair, swing, bouncy seat, walker (all matching) rainforest jump-a-roo (hardly used) WTP pack & play & baby bath, plus much more!

7) - 106 N Madison

Sat. 10-2; Sun. 10-12

Open House

The new owners of this home have nearly completed restoration and remodeling. Due to many requests, they are opening the house for the public to tour it. Believed to have been built in the late 1890's, the Kirk's are the third owners of the property.

8) - 206 E Jackson

Thu. 9-5; Fri. 9-5; Sat. 9-5 HUGE Group Sale – LOTS new and used items. picture frames, books, purses, religious items, pictures, household items, linens, etc.

9) - 201 W Washington

Thu. 8-5; Fri. 8-5; Sat. 9-12 Head vases, crochet books, yarn, clothing, scrubbies, toaster oven, LOTS of miscellaneous

10) - 108 W Adams

Thursday – Sunday 9-5 Boys clothes newborn-2T, some baby items, Thomas the Train, play kitchen and accessories and other toys, housewares, furniture, tools, tiller, yard tools and so many other items – too many to list

LAMPLIGHTER

11) - 104 Miriam Way

Sat. 8-2 baby items: swing, crib, exersaucer, layette items, little girls clothing and shoes 0-3T. Items will be priced to go!!

12) - 407 Delane Ave

Sat. *if weather is agreeable* A beautiful paint mare will be in the front yard with her owner – you are invited to stop and take a look at her!

13) - 129 Fincham Way

Thu. 3-6; Fri. 8-2; Sat. 8-2 LOTS of baby/kid clothes, girls 0-4T, boys 0-2T; baby swing, kids shoes, toys, Zhu Zhu pets; maternity clothes (medium), women's clothes 8-10

14) - 125 Hunt St

Thu. 4-6; Fri. 9-3; Sat. 8-12 Clothes: Girls 0-5T, Boys 0-6 month, maternity, women's; bassinet, toys, toy bin organizer, toy kitchen, toy doll care center, porch swing, Longaberger, Tupperware, house decor, microwave, 27" TV, Christmas decor,

15) - 124 Hunt St

Sat. 9-2 Couch, chairs, boys and girls clothes, (2) tag-along bikes, hitch bike carrier, playhouse, books, toys, and household items.

16) - 111 Hunt

Fri. 9-6; Sat. 8-1 Clothes: girls 4-5; Boys 6-7; Little Tykes playhouse, cozy coupe car, LOTS of toys and household items, much MORE

17) - 111 Olive

Thu. 8-5; Fri. 8-5; Sat. 8-12 Ladies clothes, old collectible items, old-old jewelry, Christmas decorations (like new), antique truck, pictures, old lights, old hats and hat boxes, TVs, World Book Encyclopedias, kitchen items, sewing machines, pictures/frames, oak corner shelf, cookbooks.



Ecology Action Center

Ecology Action Center Celebrates 40 Years with 40 Green Ideas

In recognition of the fortieth anniversary of its origins, the Ecology Action Center is releasing a daily Green Idea for ways residents can help in creating, strengthening, and preserving a healthy environment.

Day 1 - Be an Extreme Recycler

In 1971, a group of ISU and IWU faculty held a "one-time" recycling drive to show that it could be done. The recycling drive was so successful and so needed that the community wouldn't let them stop at just one. This recycling effort gradually enlarged and became an impressive organization known as Operation Recycle. When local municipalities took on the responsibility of recycling years later, Operation Recycle refocused its efforts on environmental education as the Ecology Action Center and continues this effort today, forty years later, as an important community leader in sustainability efforts in McLean County.

In the spirit of the original effort that were the origins of the Ecology Action Center, examine your own household recycling efforts. Hopefully most of us already have made recycling of food containers, newspapers, and the like all part of our daily routine. But what more could you be recycling that you don't already?

Household batteries, compact fluorescent bulbs and fluorescent bulbs, computers, TVs, and other electronics, old CDs, DVDs, VHS tapes, audio cassettes, vegetable oil (call the EAC) motor oil and automotive fluids-, try your local oil change place or auto service center, plastic garden pots, christmas tree lights, plastic grocery bags, newspaper sleeves, and dry cleaning bags. Alternately, how about reuse? Do you have useable items you no longer need that could be passed on to someone else? McLean County Freecycle, Habitat for Humanity, ReStore, Recycling Furniture For Families, Old House Society, and Goodwill Industries could be the answer

Day 2 – Drink Organic Fair Trade Coffee

Organic coffee is better for our health, the environment, and our conscience. The usual non-organic coffee is grown in fields cleared from the tropical forests, using pesticides that have been linked to many health problems, harming the environment and the workers. Organic coffee is shade-grown leaving forests more intact, not harming the health of the workers, and "fair trade" insures wages greater than poverty level.

One other difference even extends to McLean County – besides organic coffee being better for our health, our songbirds winter where the forests used to be before the growth of coffee using pesticides; now that so much of their wintering forests have been replaced with coffee fields sprayed with toxins, the number of songbirds has declined drastically.

While drinking your morning coffee today, remember that organic is better, not just for your own personal health, but for your environment as well. For further information on organic coffee, look at the websites listed below.

<http://www.organicfacts.net/organic-beverages/organic-coffee/organic-coffee-a-step-towards-sustainable-living.html>

<http://www.thedailygreen.com/going-green/tips/organic-coffee> <http://www.thegreenlivingexpert.com/organic-coffee.html>

Day 3 – Take a Staycation

As we all start to think about our summer plans, we might also give thought to how much pollution is created from people traveling long distances in trains, planes, and automobiles to go on vacations. Helping our environment starts at home, and can be increased by staying at home. Our vacation time can be used to learn a new skill, plant an organic garden, volunteer for Habitat for Humanity, swimming or horseback riding or hiking locally, or learning about the wonders of nature right where you live.

We can learn and do and relax right here, rather than fight crowds, stand in lines, and add to pollution far away.

For further information on staycations, look at the websites listed below. We can learn and do and relax right here, rather than fight crowds, stand in lines, and add to pollution far away.

For further information on staycations, look at the websites listed below.

<http://www.peachygreen.com/going-green/peachy/5-green-reasons-staycation>

<http://www.brighthub.com/environment/green-living/articles/44374.aspx>

<http://www.supereco.com/news/2009/05/08/37-fresh-staycation-ideas>

Day 4 – Support Wind and Solar Energy!

There is enough energy in the amount of sunlight reaching Earth's surface in 40 minutes to provide for our global energy consumption for one year, if we could utilize that energy. Investigate the sources of the energy for your home or business. Many Bloomington-Normal residents are now arranging for wind energy through Blue Star Energy, which is generated from renewable sources, not from coal and nuclear. They have found the cost difference to be negligible.

For further information on wind and solar energy, look at the website listed below.

www.bluestarenergy.com/greenpower.html

Day 5 – Green Your Refrigerator

Refrigerators can account for up to 14% of your home's energy usage, and many older refrigerator models are even bigger energy hogs. Cut down on its environmental and financial impact by vacuuming the coils, replacing seals that are no longer tight, and placing a thermometer inside of it to check its temperature. Clean the coils, check the seals, and maintain the correct temperature (36°–38°F) of your refrigerator. Check these websites to determine if it might be cost-effective for you to replace your refrigerator sooner rather than later. Ameren's Act On Energy program may even give you a rebate for your old refrigerator and haul it away for you! In the meantime, make sure the refrigerator you are using is operating as efficiently as possible.

www.energysavers.gov/tips/refrigerators.cfm

www.energyhog.org

www.michaelbluejay.com

<http://www.actonenergy.com/for-my-home/residential-incentive-programs/refrigerator-freezer-recycling/>

Day 6 - Get Your Exercise Doing Useful Work For Yourself and Your Community, Not at an Energy-Intensive Gym

Instead of going to a gym to work out on electricity-run machines and listening to electronic sounds, get exercise while participating in constructive activities helping others and building your community. Enjoy the sounds of nature and other people.

Why not get some exercise helping environmental organizations right here in McLean County? The Parklands Foundation protects and restores natural lands in the Mackinaw River valley of McLean and Woodford counties. Friday, April 22 (Earth Day), they held a workday for Garlic Mustard Control at Merwin Preserve. Contact Mary Horgan (309) 527-5636 for more information.

<http://www.parklandsfoundation.org/index.php?menu=calendar>

Day 7 - Buy paper products that are made from recycled paper

Paper products include items such as toilet paper, facial tissue, and paper towels. A critical piece of recycling is closing the loop and using products made out of recycled materials. There is no need to make paper towels and tissues out of trees when high quality recycled fiber is readily available.

At the Ecology Action Center, we use Marcal products. This company alone has saved millions of trees!

www.marcalsteps.com www.seventhgeneration.com www.letsogogreen.biz For further information about making paper, go to <http://www.childrensdiscoverymuseum.net/index.asp>

Day 8 - Protect Our Water Supplies

Happy Earth Day! On this day where we take time to recognize our impacts on our environment, what could be more important than clean water? Much of the small amount of freshwater we can access is in danger of drying up through desertification or becoming so contaminated that it cannot be used for human consumption. The United Nations estimates that two thirds of the world's population, 5 billion people, will lack access to adequate clean drinking water by 2025. Storm water runoff is one of the leading causes of water pollution nationwide and right here in our own community.

When it rains, storm water picks up pollutants such as pesticides, fertilizers, automotive fluids, silt, road salt, and garbage that have accumulated on all of the impermeable surfaces in our communities - streets, sidewalks, rooftops, driveways, parking lots, and even our turf grass lawns. This contaminated water discharges unfiltered and untreated to creeks which eventually concentrate in larger bodies of water such as rivers or lakes or the gulf of Mexico. Concentrated levels of pollutants ultimately impair these bodies of water and their ability to function as wildlife habitat, recreation areas, or as drinking water supplies.

Changing our habits of water use can help to abate this growing problem. Here are some ways that YOU can help protect our clean water:

- Use a rain barrel to reduce water usage and water runoff from your yard. Homeowners are turning to the harvesting of rainwater to save money and protect this precious natural resource. You can purchase one of these barrels here at the Ecology Action Center or watch for upcoming build-your-own rain barrel workshops!
- Dispose and recycle hazardous waste properly, don't just dump it out.
- Keep your storm drains clear of debris or litter.
- Reduce your use of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides and try organic or natural alternatives.
- Wash your car with biodegradable soap on your lawn rather than your driveway to prevent water runoff.
- Compost extra waste, build a rain garden, and use native plants in your own yard.
- Clean up your pet waste properly.

Find more information on Clean Water issues and our Yard Smart program, which promotes alternative landscaping and lawn care which is more protective of our environment, at the links below.

<http://www.ecologyactioncenter.org/clean-water/> <http://www.ecologyactioncenter.org/yard-smart/>

Day 9 - Reduce Phantom Electricity Use

Leaving your appliances on standby power or even leaving them plugged in still uses electricity, which adds up to an average ten percent of the electricity use in American homes. A typical home has 20 energy vampires! To reduce their consumption, turn your computer OFF at night or when you are not using it. Unplug cell phone chargers when not in use. Plug multiple appliances in to an easily reachable power strip, making it easy to turn them off and back on with the click of one switch. It is a free and easy way to save money and reduce your impact on the environment.

To make it even easier, you can invest in a Smart Strip, which senses when vampire appliances are shut off. They cut the power to them and make it impossible to draw "phantom" energy. If you want to determine an appliance's exact energy usage and which ones are the biggest energy hogs, you can borrow a Kill-A-Watt energy meter from the Ecology Action Center. For further information, visit the sites listed below.

<https://www.powerofaction.com/estphantomload/> <http://www.tucsonelectric.com/Green/EnergyConserv/phantomlist.asp>

Day 11 - Drive Smarter

Driving slower means saving your gas, and with gas prices reaching nearly \$4 per gallon who wouldn't want to save? But, saving gas is not only good for your wallet, but it's also good for your environment! Burning fossil fuels contributes to air pollution and global climate changes. So, the less fuel burned the better!

For every mile per hour that you drive over 60, it is like paying an additional thirty cents per gallon for your gas. Driving slower will improve your car's fuel efficiency by about two percent. And when you are driving, use your cruise control when you can. You will be guaranteed to maintain a constant and steady speed, which will ensure that you are not accelerating. If safe to do so, brake conservatively. These easy steps will help save your gas.

One final step you can take to saving your gas and lessening emissions is to lighten your load when driving. Avoid keeping unnecessary items in the backseat and trunk of your car. These items add excess weight. For each addition 100 pounds of junk in your car, your mileage per gallon is lowered two percent.

For further information on the fuel economy, see the website listed below.

www.fueleconomy.gov

Day 12 - Line-dry Your Clothes

The cheapest means of drying your clothes uses no appliances. You can simply dry your clothes with a clothes line or indoor drying rack. The heat of the sun and the breeze can get your clothes just as dry and leave them smelling fresh and without any fuzz or dryer lint.

After the refrigerator, the dryer is the second-biggest electricity-using appliance in a household, costing almost \$100 to operate every year. Over a dryer's expected lifetime of just 15 to 20 years, the average clothes dryer will cost you about \$1,500 to operate. By line drying just half of the laundry loads in one household, a family can save about 720 pounds of carbon dioxide a year.

Some neighborhoods, however, may have restrictions of clotheslines within planned communities.

So, check the codes and restrictions before purchasing your own clothes line. And if lines are restricted or you don't think they are for you, you can also purchase indoor drying racks to hang your clothing on after washing. These can be bought at several local stores.

Day 13 - Eat Lower on the Food Chain

No matter your diet, try to eat lower on the food chain, which will help conserve resources and reduce pollution. Factory farms often contribute to runoff pollution reaching our water supplies. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has determined that animal waste causes more pollution to the environment than any other industrial resource.

Roughly 70 percent of the grains grown in the United States go toward feeding animals that will later become food. The land used to grow the food for animals and also the food itself could be used directly by humans. It takes ten times the fossil fuels to produce a calorie of animal food as it does to produce plant food.

Eating less meat can save you money while helping the environment! The cheapest cuts of boneless chicken breasts and beef are on average \$3 to \$4 per pound. Whereas buying a pound of beans, lentils, or rice are on average less than \$1 per pound. Even tofu normally costs only about \$2 per

pound. By reducing meat from your diet, you'll be living a more sustainable and economical life. But no extremes need to be taken on your diet. Try eating a meatless meal every other day or to go meatless just for one week. Even choosing poultry over meat is less resource intensive. Making any changes towards a less meat intensive diet can greatly help our environment!

Day 14 - Use an Electric or Push Lawn Mower

When mowing your yard this spring, try not to use a riding lawn mower. Instead, use an electric or push lawn mower and reduce use of fossil fuels and also emissions that pollute our air.

The bigger the mower, the more non-renewable fossil fuels used for its construction and maintenance. Over 500 million gallons of gas are used each year for power mowers with riding lawn mowers using the most. A study in California found that mower emissions per year were equivalent to that produced by 3.5 million automobiles having driven 16,000 miles each. Regular mowing also reduces wildlife habitat, destroys nesting wildlife, and eliminates food for pollinating insects that farmers and nature depend on.

So how can you be more environmentally friendly when taking care of your yard? You can use a reel or push mower versus a riding lawn mower. You can also use an electric mower that is powered by a rechargeable battery or cord plugged into an outdoor socket. Electric mowers are easier to push than a reel mower, and the amount of electricity used is minimal. You can also choose to plant native plants for your landscaping, which reduces the amount of grass needing to be mowed and also less effort to mow it. Also make sure that your blades are nice and sharp before mowing. And if you don't want to go out and purchase a more environmentally friendly mower, see if your neighbor or your friend has one that you could borrow.

Day 15 – Use a Reusable Water Bottle

Why waste your money on buying expensive water bottles that you throw away when you can get water for free from your tap? Reduce your waste and use reusable water bottles. Currently three out of four Americans drink bottled water, and one out of five Americans drink only bottled water. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, the recycling rate for PET bottles is not even 30 percent.

Remember to try and drink from the faucet rather than reach for bottled water, and use a portable, reusable bottle for when you are on the go. And if you choose to use bottled water, please remember to recycle!

View Ecology Action Center's new video "Water Bottle Revolution" at:

http://www.ecologyactioncenter.org/sustainable-living/40_Days_of_Green.shtml.

Day 17 - Keep Organic Material on Your Property (And Don't Bring In More)

Grass clippings typically comprise 10 to 20 percent of the solid waste collected by communities on a year-round basis. Instead of putting grass clippings, weeds and tree and bush branches or limbs on the street to be picked up by fossil-fuel burning vehicles, keep them on your property as mulch, compost, fertilizer or wood chips. In doing so, you may not need to buy mulch and wood chips from faraway places.

Along with reducing emissions from pick-up vehicles or your own car, these organic materials also act as a free and eco-friendly way to fertilize your lawn.

Follow the 40 days of 40 Green Ideas at www.ecologyactioncenter.org, on Facebook at www.facebook.com/EcologyActionCenter, or on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/ecoactioncenter>.

The Ecology Action Center is a not-for-profit walk-in information and environmental education center with a mission to inspire and assist residents of McLean County in creating, strengthening, and preserving a healthy environment.