

# October 2022

## Upcoming Programs: Natural Environment and Built Environment

Here are two great programs we're highlighting for this October!



### **Gardening That Matters: Fall Clean-up and Planting**

**WHEN:** Monday, October 17 at 7:00 PM

**WHERE:** Glenview Public Library and virtual

**SPONSORS:** Greener Glenview and the Greener Glenview Public Library

Leslie Shad, founder of Natural Habitat Evanston, will describe eco-friendly practices for providing nutrients to the soil, winter shelter for pollinators and songbirds, planting natives, and more.

[Register](#)



### **Net Zero Energy Tour: Techny Prairie Activity Center**

**WHEN:** Wednesday, October 19 at 10:00 AM

**WHERE:** Techny Prairie Activity Center

**SPONSORS:** Northbrook Park

District and Illinois Green Alliance

**COST:** \$10 for Illinois Green Alliance members; \$15 for non-members

Join this guided tour of their new fitness center, the Techny Prairie Activity Center. This building is one of the first net zero energy verified projects in Illinois—meaning the building produces as much energy as it uses.

Members of the project team and park district staff will discuss how the park district's program offerings shaped the building design, including windows, envelope, solar, educational signage, and more.

[Register](#)

---

## **September 19 Environment & Natural Resources Commission Meeting Highlights**

- Robert Hevey, Jr. was appointed to the ENRC. Student commissioners are being sought.
- Evanston has adopted a bird-friendly building ordinance. A commissioner requested that the ENRC consider recommending that the village board adopt a similar ordinance for 2023 World Migratory Bird Day, the weekend of May 13, 2023. Sustainability Coordinator Laycob expressed interest in looking into this and other notable annual environmental events, e.g. World Water Day.
- A Sustainability Plan Request for Proposal is being developed and will be discussed at the November meeting.
- Concern over idling cars, buses, and freight trains exists across units of local government. How to address this issue will be one component of the sustainability plan.
- Village staff (Tony Repp of the Community Development Department) presented a draft of sustainable design guidelines being prepared for

review the first week of November. ENRC Commissioners inquired about the village's procurement guidelines regarding recycled content of office products and the reuse of building materials in new development projects. Chairman Newman identified several USEPA websites which will be helpful in evaluating the village's purchasing standards and reuse of construction & demolition materials. Commissioners said the directory would be useful for public education.

- Tree Program update: Approximately 85-90 applicants have applied for the village's cost-share program for planting trees on private property.
- Plan for Nature update: Hey and Associates has visited 80% of the 99 sites from the 2010 plan plus 15 more sites. They will present their findings at the November 14 ENRC meeting.
- Bike and Pedestrian Plan update: Glenview's consultants (A. Epstein & Sons) will be tabling at the October 22 Glenview Farmers' Market Green Table. An open house on the draft new plan will be held on November 3, from 4:30-7:00 p.m. at the Park Center.
- The Longvalley Streambank Stabilization project is funded by Clean Water Act Sec. 319. This project will improve water quality through erosion control, thereby reducing the sediment load in the stream.
- Commission members attended the July and August meetings of the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus (MMC). The July meeting focused on walkability/bikeability. Pedestrian/bike deaths have increased 12%. Bike lanes need to be safe and incorporated as part of a "complete streets" vision. The August MMC meeting focused on environmental justice and diversity, equity, and inclusion in the sustainability field.
- Nominations for the Environmental Sustainability Awards are due Nov. 1.
- A River Cleanup Day (not affiliated with Friends of the Chicago River) will be held in the Fall.
- Public comment period: (1) Valley Lo residents expressed concerns about a proposed lighting of the tennis courts and a storage lot and removal of trees and other vegetation that could cause erosion of the river, currently under consideration by the Development Adjustments Commission. Residents already experience light pollution and water

reflection from Valley Lo Club lighting, and the Loyola soccer fields. ENRC staff Robyn Flakne was not involved in a review of the proposal. (2) Another resident inquired about Glenview's enforcement of its weed ordinance in order to combat the spread of the invasive phragmites. Phragmites are proliferating at Glenbrook Hospital's native landscape area and near the Costco gas station. Both locations are in close proximity to environmentally sensitive areas—The Grove and Air Station Prairie. The resident was advised to file a complaint, but it was noted that the weed ordinance has to do with plant height and is not species-specific.

---



## **Cook County Forest Preserve Referendum -- Early Voting Begins October 12**

In the September bulletin, Greener Glenview described why it joined the coalition supporting the VOTE YES for Clean Air, Clean Water, and Wildlife referendum. The forest preserves provide an array of (1) ecological services that help combat climate change, (2) diverse plant, animal, and fungi habitats, (3) recreational and educational opportunities, and (4) human health and wellness benefits.

The Forest Preserve District of Cook County is asking for a modest one-quarter of one percent (0.025%) increase in its tax levy. This is the first time since

1930 that a tax increase has been sought.

[For more information](#) about the referendum

Election day is Tuesday, November 8 but you can vote early at Glenview Village Hall from October 24-November 7. THE REFERENDUM IS AT THE BOTTOM OF THE BALLOT. Please vote Yes.

---



## Answering your Recycling Questions

We continue to receive questions from Greener Glenview subscribers regarding recycling do's and don'ts. Here are the latest questions, with answers supplied by the Recycling and Education Director at SWANCC, Mary Allen.

### Single Use Plastics

Q: Regarding no single-use plastics for recycling, I understand it for the most part, except that I have been recycling Solo cups after rinsing them out (usually used for water or juice), and will also wash out salad containers to recycle (or bubble tea cups), as all of these items have the "recycle" symbol on them. So are they not acceptable even if they are clean? I understand no straws, cardboard Starbucks cups, utensils, styrofoam, chip bags and all the others, but I was surprised about these 3.

A: Manufacturers' labels can be misleading. Just because a package states it's "recyclable" or has a number 1-7 on it, doesn't mean it can be recycled in your community's cart program. Material Recovery Facilities do not use the same technology and determine what is recyclable due to their technology capabilities and downstream markets. Numbers were never meant for the consumer. It indicates to the industry the polymers used to make the

container for reprocessing.

So, at this time, Groot does not accept plastic or paper single-serve cups, carry-out food containers, that include salad containers. Berry containers are just being accepted by recyclers. All this may change in the very near future; stay tuned!

### **To Crush or Not?**

Q: I saw that plastic bottles should NOT be crushed, but I've been doing that with gallon jugs (from milk) to save space. So I should stop doing that, I guess? I also thought the air inside might make it more likely to fly away on a windy day, which is less desirable, no?

A: If plastic bottles or jugs get flattened, the optical sorters at the MRF cannot recognize the item and if it is flat will put it in the fiber stream with other paper. Note: Don't crush aluminum cans, either.

### **What About Bottle Caps?**

Q: I see that no small caps should be included on glass bottles. Is this because they are mixed material - plastic caps on glass bottles, and with small caps, they can be easily lost/stuck in sorting perhaps?... because plastic bottles should be recycled with their caps on them. Just wondering the reasoning on this.

A: Basic rule of thumb – only put caps back on plastic bottles, jugs, and cartons. All other plastic lids are garbage. Metal lids can remain on or be detached from the glass jar in the recycling cart as long as they are 3" or larger. Metal caps are small fall through holes and get stuck in the sorting machinery. Throw them away.

### **Shredded Paper**

Q: I saw that shredded paper is not recyclable. What's the reason for this? We'll typically put it all in a paper bag to recycle, but I guess that's not acceptable?

A: Because shredded paper gets loose during collection and transportation, it causes a mess, gets into all other material streams causing contamination, and cannot be captured for recycling because it is pieces of small paper. If you want your paper documents with personal information shredded, it is best to utilize one of SWANCC's shredding events during April – November.

### **Milk Cartons and Waxed Boxes**

Q: I'm also glad to settle the debate about whether cardboard milk cartons are

recyclable or not, as it seems that they are recyclable... but my only question is: are these cartons not considered "waxed boxes"? (I wasn't sure because I thought the interior is technically waxed, but I don't know.) What would be an example of a waxed box?

A: Cardboard milk cartons are recyclable. Wax boxes are usually frozen food items, like ice cream containers.

For more information: Mary Allen at SWANCC provided an 11-minute [video presentation](#) that has an explanation for many of your questions.

---



## **Rooftop Solar: Tales from the Front**

Since 2016, more than 115 rooftop solar permits have been issued to Glenview residents and businesses. Are the permit holders happy they went solar? What do they wish they'd known before they signed up?

In September, Greener Glenview collaborated with Go Green Northbrook to launch the Glenbrook Solar Tour in association with the Illinois Solar Energy Association's annual solar tour event. The purpose of the tour was to let visitors learn about going solar without the pressure of a sales pitch. Below is a summary of relevant considerations that tour hosts shared with visitors.

The solar tour hosts were unanimous in their satisfaction with their systems. However, several of them said they wished they had known what questions to ask the prospective installers. It's important to be an educated consumer so that you choose wisely and end up realizing the maximum gain from your system. The following questions may be helpful as you consider whether to install rooftop solar. Resources to help answer some of these questions will be posted on Greener Glenview's website under its Education tab. As with other major home improvements, it's best to get estimates from multiple contractors.

**First, consider your property issues:**

- Does your roof get enough sun?
- Do you plan to get an electric car or water heater soon? The size of your installation is based on your average energy use over the last year.
- How long do you plan to stay in your house? Long enough to recover your investment?

**Plan to ask prospective installers:**

- **Does the pitch, age, and material of my roof matter?** Ask the installer if they install on cedar shake shingles, for example. Or if there are special considerations for a steeply pitched roof, or a flat roof. What's the cost of removing the array if the roof needs repair?
- **Does it matter if squirrels gain access to my roof?** Depending on whether your panels are flush-mounted or on a roof rack, squirrel activity may be a relevant concern.
- **What is the maximum power I could generate, considering the shading and size of my roof?** This affects your return on investment.
- **Is my electric panel large enough to accommodate solar?** Is it large enough to add battery storage? If you need a new panel to accommodate solar, the cost is eligible for tax rebates.
- **What kind of panels do you install—wattage, technology, color—and why do you recommend them?**
- **What type of inverter system do you install, and why?** There are two basic kinds of inverters (which convert energy produced into energy that can be distributed in your house and to the grid): Line inverter, or microinverter. A Line inverter is one component that converts energy from the whole system. A microinverter is installed on each panel and sends that panel's energy to your panel, battery, or the grid. There are pluses and minuses to each.
- **Where will the conduit and components be installed?** Can I have them installed inside the house? What is the cost of doing this, now and in case of repairs are needed?
- **What are the warranties for panels, inverters, roof leakage, and labor for repair?** Most installers purchase components from suppliers who warranty their products. Some installers also manufacture all components.
- **What mobile software package will allow me to see how my system is functioning?**
- **How does net-metering work?** Will my system qualify for one-to-one credit per kilowatt hour generated and returned to the grid?
- **What are the financial options: own, own and lease, or lease? How does each affect return on investment?**

- **What kind of maintenance am I responsible for?**
- **What are the incentives currently offered by the state or federal government?** How do I apply for these incentives?
- **How long will the entire process take** (paperwork processing, village permitting, installation, getting turned on by ComEd)?

If you decide that rooftop solar is not for you right now, you can sign up for Community Solar. This no-cost option to using solar energy to meet your electric needs will save you some money while helping support Illinois' clean energy goals and green job creation.

Finally, the cheapest energy is the kilowatt-hour you don't need in the first place. Have you done an energy assessment of your house? Is your house well insulated? Have you changed all your lightbulbs to LEDs? Are the windows and doors well sealed? Addressing these home fixes will save you money in the long run on your electric and gas bill and reduce your home's greenhouse gas emissions. You can [sign up for a home energy assessment](#) with ComEd by clicking on the "Get Started" button next to "Schedule Your Assessment Today".



## Hurricane Ian and the Power Grid

As Hurricane Ian wreaked its havoc in Florida and the Carolinas last week, we wondered whether the electrical grid would have been more resilient had it been more solar-power based. Would solar panels be able to withstand the force of 150 mph winds?

On October 2, this [CNN news report](#) addressed this issue from the perspective of Babcock Ranch, FL, some 12 miles northeast of Fort Meyers. Climate resiliency was an intentional focus in the development of Babcock Ranch. Calling itself "America's first solar-powered town", read how the community, with 700,000 solar panels, fared during the recent hurricane.

This article got us thinking about the prior use of the land on which those 700,000 solar panels sit. Was it farmland or forest? If so, must farmland and forest be sacrificed in order to create a solar-based electrical grid? Rooftops and parking lots combined could, in theory, meet nearly 80 percent of the nation's electricity needs, according to the Department of Energy. Yet rooftops and parking lots are not where most panels are going in Virginia, or elsewhere in the United States. A 2021 study found that most solar panels in Virginia end up in forests and on farmland.

[Read more](#) This opinion piece has a paywall, but a Glenview reference librarian can access it and send it to you.