



FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER



The Zero Waste Schools newsletter will help you get your school on a path toward generating zero waste through waste prevention, recycling, composting, and food recovery. You'll also find resources that connect zero waste to healthy eating, school gardens, and environmental education and action.

Share the newsletter with friends, colleagues, and students interested in zero waste.

[Sign up for ZWS news](#)

McHenry County Sustainability Summit focused on a zero waste future for schools

As part of SGA's continued collaboration with the [Environmental Defenders of McHenry County](#), the Zero Waste Schools team was pleased to participate in the Defenders' first ever Sustainability Summit last month. The summit was planned by the Defenders' Waste Reduction Action Team and brought together local officials, schools, and restaurants to discuss ways of reducing food waste and single-use plastics in their local communities.



During the breakout sessions focused on schools, **Zero Waste Schools Program Manager, Susan Casey**, and **SGA Executive Director, Gary Cuneen**, presented on zero waste practices in K-12 schools. The presentation highlighted ways to reduce food waste and plastics in school lunchrooms, as well as the different composting options available to schools. They also shared some of the many [resources available](#) on the Zero Waste Schools website. Following the presentation, teachers, administrators, and other school staff participated in a rich conversation about how to get their schools on a path to zero waste, even with the challenges of COVID.

SGA looks forward to continued collaboration with the Defenders to reduce waste in McHenry County.

One Earth Film Festival

March 4-13, virtual and in-person

Join [One Earth Collective](#) for the 11th annual [One Earth Film Festival](#) (OEFF). OEFF is the Midwest's premier environmental film festival creating opportunities for understanding climate change, sustainability, and the power of human involvement. Inspiring and thought-



provoking environmental films are followed by interactive post-film discussions focused on solutions.

Seventeen virtual events will screen during the week of March 4-13. If the Omicron surge cooperates, up to 15 in-person events will be added at the same times and days as the virtual events.

View the film schedule [HERE](#).

EEAI Annual Conference: *Building Connections*

April 8-9

Hoover Forest Preserve - Yorkville, IL

Join environmental educators from all over Illinois for the [Environmental Education Association of Illinois 2022 Annual Conference](#) and enjoy two days of incredible learning, networking, and entertainment. The conference includes a keynote presentation from Dr. Jean-Marie Kauth, Professor of English Language and Literature at St. Benedictine University, exhibits, concurrent sessions, hands-on workshops, and field experiences.



The conference theme, *Building Connections*, is organized in these four strands:

- **Building Awareness** - Information or investigative sessions to support environmental literacy and inquiry of the natural world.
- **Building Bridges** - Highlights of partnerships and projects that promote collaborations between organizations
- **Building Networks** - Sessions focused on careers in the environment and programs connecting early career professionals
- **Building Sustainability** - Special strand focused on Illinois Green Alliance and U.S. Department of Education's Green Ribbon Schools 3 Pillars of Sustainability

SGA's Zero Waste Schools team will be presenting **Zero Waste Lunchrooms: The How and Why of Reducing Waste** on April 8. Hope to see you there!

Register [HERE](#).

Loyola University's 2022 Virtual Climate Change Conference

March 14-18

Join Loyola University's School of Environmental Sustainability for their [2022 Virtual Climate Change Conference: The Intersection of Climate Change, Human Health, and Justice](#). Hear from science experts, front-line advocates, and Illinois legislators who are addressing these pressing issues.



The School of Environmental Sustainability will be hosting its signature conference through a weeklong series of events and programming in collaboration with several other Loyola Centers and Institutes.

Register [HERE](#).

Food Waste Warrior Toolkits now available in Spanish



The World Wildlife Foundation's Food Waste Warriors Toolkits are now [available in Spanish!](#) These helpful toolkits include K-12 lessons, activities, and resources organized by grade band to teach the planetary impact of what we eat and what we throw away. In addition to the link above, the Spanish translations of these toolkits can be found on the [Wild Classroom main page](#), along with several other great conservation teaching toolkits.

Chicago Conservation Corps Sustainability Leadership Training Series

Orientations offered online March 10 & 14-16, and in-person March 9
Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum, 2430 N. Cannon Drive, Chicago

The Chicago Conservation Corps is now recruiting for its [Spring 2022 Sustainability Leadership Training Series](#). This program empowers Chicagoans to complete neighborhood sustainability and environmental projects that impact and engage communities across the city.



To participate in the training course, **you must be an adult Chicago resident**, attend an orientation, and submit an application. **Applications are due March 21.**

RSVP for an online or in-person orientation [HERE](#) to learn more.

Beyond Plastic Pollution online course



Take a "deep dive" into the problem of plastic pollution by enrolling in Bennington College's *Beyond Plastic Pollution* online course this spring. Taught by Judith Enck - founder and president of [Beyond Plastics](#) - this environmental policy class is **open to people of all ages, including high school and college students.**

This is a particularly useful class for those who want to tackle the issue of plastic in their own community, state, and nation.

Wednesdays, 7-9 pm EST, April 13 - May 25
Cost: \$100 to audit or \$400 to receive college credit

Learn more and register [HERE](#). Email capa@bennington.edu for more information.

Too Good to Go resources for schools

The food recovery app, [Too Good to Go](#) seeks to inspire and empower everyone to take action against food waste. They have developed a range of free [educational tools and resources](#) around food waste for schools and universities whose goal is to teach the next generation how to value resources and to protect the planet.



Grants and other opportunities

[President's Environmental Youth Award](#) Your student's project could be an award winner! Encourage your students with an existing environmental stewardship project or an

idea for a project to apply. Applicants from all 50 states as well as U.S. territories are eligible. **Deadline: Feb. 18.**

Presidential Innovation Award for Environmental Educators For K-12 teachers who employ innovative approaches to environmental education and use the environment as a context for teaching their students. Up to two teachers from each of the EPA's 10 regions will be selected to receive this award. **Deadline: Feb. 18.**

Illinois Conservation Foundation's Conservation Achievement Scholarship Awarded to 4 high school seniors in Illinois who have demonstrated effective, voluntary, and long-term dedication to the preservation, protection, enhancement, and/or promotion of Illinois' natural resources. **Deadline: Mar. 1.**

Whole Kids Foundation Garden Grant This grant provides \$3,000 to support a new or existing edible educational garden located at either a K-12 school or at a nonprofit organization that serves children in grades K-12. **Application open Feb. 14-Mar. 11.**

Project Green Schools Outdoor Classroom Challenge Pre-K-12 schools across the country are invited to develop and implement a meaningful outdoor classroom and learning space that awards one Grand Prize of \$10,000 to further enhance an existing space or build a new space. Schools will submit a formal write-up, proposed budget, and design of their outdoor learning classroom/space. **Deadline: Apr. 8.**

Whole Kids Foundation Salad Bar Grant Any district or independent school participating in the National School Lunch Program can apply. The grant program donates salad bars to U.S. schools to give kids daily access to fresh fruits and vegetables. **Applications are accepted on a rolling basis.**

Events

CFPAC's 17th Annual Chicago Food Justice Summit

Feb. 23-25, 10 am-4 pm, virtual

Join the Chicago Food Policy Action Council in celebrating 17 years of leveraging collective power to create policy change. The theme of this year's summit will be Collective Care, highlighting how, in the face of a global pandemic, neighbors, mutual aid networks, cooks, and local growers showed up for us and for each other. **Registration is now open and free of charge.**

The Pest Defense

Feb. 24, 4-5 pm

Attend this webinar to learn about The Pest Defense for Healthy Schools and IPM essentials, which include managing pests with limited pesticides. Led by IPM Institute of North America in partnership with Illinois Green Alliance and the Illinois Green Schools Project.

Small Farms Winter Webinar Series: Introduction to Vermicomposting

Mar. 3, 12-1 pm

Join the University of Illinois Extension and Crystal Stevens with **Flourish Farmstead** to learn the basics of vermicomposting. Crystal will discuss soil health, how to build indoor and outdoor vermicompost bins, how to care for red wiggler worms, and how to maintain bins. The presentation will also be recorded and shared with those who register.

School Composting: The Basics and What to Consider

Mar. 24, 2-3:30 pm (CST)

Join the New Hampshire Farm to School Network for this webinar on the basics of composting at your school and what to consider when building your site. Presenters will review case study examples to help spark inspiration when developing your school's composting program.

Seven Generations Ahead | [Email](#) | [Website](#)



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