

# MCLEAN COUNTY GREENWAYS NEWS

SPRING 2015: VOLUME III, ISSUE II



*From the Chair*

*Mike Hall, Chairman, Greenways Advisory Committee*

***“A linear open space established along either a natural corridor, such as a riverfront, stream valley, or ridgeline, or overland along a railroad right-of-way converted to recreational use, a canal, a scenic road, or other route.”***

The above is one of four elements in the definition of a greenway from Charles Little’s work ‘*Greenways for America*’ and quoted in the latest edition (2009) of the **McLean County Regional Greenways Plan**.

Little goes on to state that “it is sometimes appropriate for open space and recreational use to function together; in other cases, the two should remain separate. Greenways provide a variety of environmental benefits that promote harmony between the natural and built environments.”

I have had the great fortune in my life to have participated in a very small way toward the development of ‘greenways’ in McLean County. I have come to believe that this concept or movement is one of the truly sustainable practices of the human species.

My belief in ‘greenways’ developed and solidified over the last fifteen years of my professional career and began as I was one of many participants in the McLean County Greenways Coalition which was formed to provide input in the development of the 1997 original edition of the plan. After the adoption of that original plan and before retiring from local government service, I was also very fortunate to help implement several priority projects identified in the plan. By the time I retired in 2010, I had become a true and avid convert.

Soon after and since retirement, I was given an almost miraculous opportunity to continue participating while serving the *ParkLands Foundation* in an administrative role. *ParkLands* has been and continues to be a very active facilitator of the plan.

The mission of the *ParkLands Foundation* is to preserve, protect and ecologically restore historic natural lands in the middle and upper Mackinaw Valley watershed. These lands are dedicated primarily for preserving the biological diversity of native plants and wildlife, and secondarily for passive public recreation, environmental education, and scientific research. The Mackinaw River is not only one of the highest priority greenways identified but *Parklands* mission fulfills all of the target initiatives for implementation of the plan.

I look forward to continuing this work in my new role.

Mike Hall

Administrative Director, *Parklands Foundation*

Chairman, McLean County Greenways Advisory Committee

## City of Bloomington Approves Bike Master Plan

On May 11, the Bloomington City Council approved a Bicycle Master Plan. The plan was developed by City of Bloomington Engineering and Planning staffs along with the League of Illinois Bicyclists. The plan sets guidelines and initiatives for future biking structures, lanes, routes, parking and signage as well as other suggested bicycle design standards and infrastructure. Implementation of the plan will be gradual and infrastructure will be designed and built as future city budgets allow. The document can be viewed on the City of Bloomington website at [www.cityblm.org](http://www.cityblm.org).

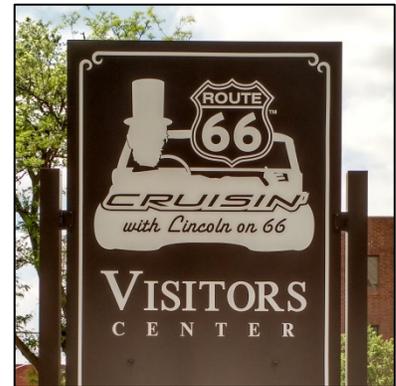
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## Route 66 Exhibit Opens at History Museum

Approximately 500 people, including local dignitaries, attended the grand opening of the Cruisin' With Lincoln on Route 66 Visitors Center on April 25 at the McLean County Museum of History. The visitors center includes displays that highlight the Mother Road's history within Bloomington-Normal and McLean County.

It features displays on Abraham Lincoln's life in central Illinois along with a historical perspective on Route 66 construction and what it meant to McLean County as a transportation and economic development engine. Historical businesses and locations are also highlighted in the displays. It is hoped the visitors center will be a catalyst for future tourism among Route 66 enthusiasts and others wanting to experience the historical motorway.



For further information on the visitors center, visit [www.mchistory.org](http://www.mchistory.org).

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## Sugar Grove Announces 2015 Activities Calendar

Sugar Grove Nature Center, located at Funks Grove, has announced its 2015 Events Calendar. For more information on these events contact the Nature Center at [www.sugargrovenaturecenter.org](http://www.sugargrovenaturecenter.org) or at (309) 874-2174.

June 6: National Trails Day (10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.)

June 20: Inside Out Arts Fair (10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.)

June 27-28: Great American Backyard Campout (Time TBA)

August 29: Hummingbird Festival and Pollination Celebration (10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.)

October 24: Autumn Celebration (10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.)

## **Wheelers Announce “Spring Metric”**

The McLean County Wheelers Bicycle Club has announced June 13 as the date for its Spring Metric. The purpose of the event is to increase overall bicycling skills and endurance by riding distances of five, 20, 40 or 60 miles throughout COMLARA Park at Evergreen Lake. You can register online at the Wheelers website at [www.mcleancountywheelers.com](http://www.mcleancountywheelers.com) or download the registration brochure and register by mail. Early registrations should be received by May 29. Registration on the day of the ride begins at 6:30 a.m. at COMLARA Park. Riders are required to be on the road no later than 10:30 a.m. Registration includes lunch and a T-shirt.

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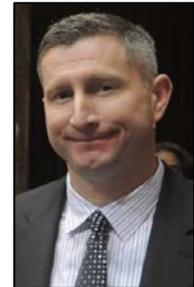
## **City and Town Name New Parks & Recreation Directors**



*Jay Tetzloff*

Miller Park Zoo Superintendent Jay Tetzloff has been named the new Parks and Recreation and Cultural District Director for the City of Bloomington. Tetzloff has been with the city since 2009. He will keep his responsibilities at the Miller Park Zoo. Tetzloff replaces John Kennedy who left for a similar position in Gilbert, Arizona.

The Town of Normal has named Chris Cotten as its Parks and Recreation Director. Cotten replaces Garry Little who recently announced his retirement. Cotten comes from Joplin, Missouri where he served in the same post since 2011. Before his position in Joplin, Cotten was parks director in Harrisonville, Missouri. He also held parks and recreation positions in Excelsior Springs, Missouri and Kansas City. He will begin his duties in Normal on June 15.



*Chris Cotten*

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## **Normal Plans Trail Expansion**

The Town of Normal hopes to continue expansion of the Constitution Trail as the building season begins. Planned trail expansion includes completion of the Northtown Road extension from Linden Street west. There is also planned construction of the trail from Raab Road to Shepard Road which will go behind Grove Elementary. A third extension is planned from the Ironwood Park parking lot into the Ironwood Subdivision which is, and will be part of, the popular loop route.

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## **Yard Smart Garden Walk**

The Ecology Action Center will be sponsoring its annual Yard Smart Garden walk from 9:00 a.m. to noon on Saturday, June 27. During the walk, several homes will be toured that feature “yard smart” principles. The Yard Smart program is a voluntary effort to help reduce synthetic pesticide use, conserve natural resources, and encourage the placement of wildlife. More information on the walk and the Yard Smart program can be obtained by calling the EAC at 454-3169.

## **McLean County Parks Announces Spring - Summer Schedule**

The McLean County Parks and Recreation Department has announced its outdoor activity calendar for 2015. Below is a list of activities through August:

May 16: Mackinaw River Canoe Trip

May 23: Swimming beach and boat rental opens

June 6: Tri-Shark Triathlon

June 6: Adventure "O" Orienteering Event

June 13: Beach Blowout and Wacky Water Olympics

June 20: Introduction to Kayaking

June 27: Shady Hollow Relay Run

June 27: Central Illinois Open Water Swim

July 11: COMLARA Ice Cream Social

July 18: Fisherman's 7K Trail Run

July 25: Take a Kid Fishing Tournament

August 8: Evergreen Lake 5K Run

August 15: Canoe Orienteering Program

August 15: Shady Hollow Painful Elimination Run

August 30: Mud, Sweat and Gears Off-Road Mountain Biking Race

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### **National Trails Day is June 6**

The Sugar Grove Nature Center will celebrate National Trails Day from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on Saturday, June 6 with a variety of activities. Guided hikes, informational booths, special opportunities for Boy and Girl Scouts and other fun activities will be part of the celebration. The Nature Center's seven miles of hiking trails will also be open for participants to enjoy. The event is free and open to the public. Leashed pets are also allowed on the grounds for the day. Pack a lunch and plan to stay all day.

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If you are interested in becoming a member, or are interested in attending McLean County Greenways Advisory Committee meetings, please contact Rick Nolan at [rnolan@mcplan.org](mailto:rnolan@mcplan.org) or (309) 828-4331 ext. 26.