



HEALTH

Wise

THE SAFER PATH

Cleaning Our Water: The Ripple Effect

By Laurine Brown PhD, MPH, RD

I loved skipping rocks as a kid, watching how the tiny “plunks” rippled out, making the whole stream quiver. *This* bumps into *that*. The ripple effect. The more I learn about water, the more awed I am. This “blue gold” is the essence of all life on this planet. Without it life as we know it would cease. That means us. On an ordinary day, most Americans *never* think about this. Yet our bodies are 70 percent water. And water *becomes* us, literally. Water that was just in our well (which was once a puddle, cloud, or ocean wave), is gulped from our water glass, soon to moisten our lips, becomes our blood, tears, sweat, transporting vital nutrients around our body, and escorting unwanted toxins out. That’s as intimate as it gets. So, if we are earth’s waters, then what’s in earth’s water matters for our health.

A hundred years ago Americans’ drinking water teemed with invisible microbes that made us sick, largely flourishing from our own human habits — overcrowding and a daily dumping of life’s waste. With the aid of a microscope we understood the source, and changed our ways to prevent contamination through improved sanitation, water treatment and clean water legislation. As a result, today most Americans’ drinking water is safe from harmful microbes (though some 2.3 billion people worldwide still suffer yearly.) But, as before, even though Americans’ water may *seem* clean, a closer look reveals invisible threats. Take the 2002 U.S. Geological Survey which found 80 percent of streams sampled had one or more pollutants, and one-third had ten or more. *Gulp*. Like what? Traces of steroids, antibiotics, insect repellants, pesticides and stuff. *Double gulp*. We ask “Where did

these come from?” If we “sharpen our focus” with the aid of scientific studies (like people did a century ago with a microscope on germs), we will, again, see remnants of our own human habits in our water. If we understand the source of these remnants, surely we can change our ways and clean up our water like we did before.

Dirty Dinner Fork: Many water pollutants come from growing and transporting our food, especially meat. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency claims runoff from large factory farms pollutes our waterways more than all other industrial sources combined, including spills from some 89,000 pounds of animal excrement piled up *per second*, antibiotic and hormone residues. Over 1 billion tons of pesticides are used yearly, most to grow grains to feed animals. Not surprisingly, surveys reveal 100 percent of our surface waters have at least one pesticide. And fertilizer runoff creates “dead zones” and blue baby syndrome. **Green Your Fork.** Choose **organic foods** which are grown without toxic chemicals (and are consistently higher in vitamins/minerals, including 25 percent higher in antioxidants.) Prefer **locally grown foods** which travel only about 55 miles, compared with 1,500 for non-local bites. **Eat less meat.** Or at least support livestock farms that use sustainable practices. Look for “organic,” “free range,” “antibiotic-free.” Check farmer’s markets. See <http://www.eatwellguide.org/> and <http://www.sustainabletable.org/>.

Artificially-Greened Lawn: High nitrate fertilizers, weedkillers, and other yard chemicals may artificially green and weed your lawn, but they end up contaminating soils, storm drains, and eventually your drinking water,

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Clean Water: The Ripple Effect

Friday, April 17, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
Saturday, April 18, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
Shirk Center Arena

MANY DIVERSE EXHIBITORS

Numerous Resources on Green & Healthy Living

Local Food Producers & Cooking Demonstrations

Share the Experience of Freecycle and much, much more!

SPECIAL EVENTS ON

SATURDAY, APRIL 18

Kids Eco-Carnival

An Affordable Fashion Show

11 Dynamic Break Away Workshops

(see page 3 for details) followed by

The award-winning documentary

FLOW

Everyone is Welcome—Free Admission

For more information about the
Expo go to www.islwe.org

NUTRITION BITES

Recipe of the Month

Asparagus season is fast approaching. Soon those delicious green spears will be in abundance. Wellness published this recipe back in 2002 and it remains a favorite, so we thought it was worth repeating.

Enjoy!

Roasted Asparagus with Balsamic Browned Butter

Ingredients needed:

40 asparagus spears, trimmed (about 2 pounds)	1/8 teaspoon black pepper
Olive oil to coat asparagus	2 tablespoons butter
1/4 teaspoon kosher salt	2 teaspoons low-sodium soy sauce
	1 teaspoon balsamic vinegar

1. Preheat oven to 400°F
2. Arrange asparagus in a single layer on a baking sheet; coat with olive oil. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Bake at 400°F for 12 minutes or until tender.
3. Melt butter in a small skillet over medium heat, cook for 3 minutes or until lightly browned, shaking pan occasionally. Remove from heat, stir in soy sauce and vinegar. Drizzle over asparagus, tossing well to coat. Serve immediately.

In Conjunction with the Illinois Sustainable Living & Wellness Expo, please join this panel of experts to explore:

CLEAN WATER, HEALTHY FOOD: YOUR CHOICES MATTER Thursday, April 16, 7:00-9:00 PM Young Main Lounge, Memorial Center

Do you know that 89 percent of the land in McLean County is used for agriculture?*

Do you know the way we farm affects the purity and healthfulness of your drinking water?

Do you know how YOUR CHOICES can make a Difference?

Introduction—Why Do We Need to Talk about Our Water in McLean County?

- Marsha Veninga, Heartland Local Food Network

What's in Your Water?

- Walt Kelly, Ph.D., Illinois State Water Survey

How Do Farm Chemicals Affect Your Water?

- Steven J. Han der Hoven, associate professor, Department of Geography-Geology, Illinois State University
- Steve John, Executive director, Agricultural Watershed Institute

What Can Farmers Do to Improve the Quality of Your Water?

- Kent Bohnhoff, district conservationist, USDA—Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Dave Bishop, resource conservationist, McLean County Soil and Water Conservation District

Why Do Your Choices Matter?

- Lindsay Record, executive director, Illinois Stewardship Alliance
- Laurine Brown, Ph.D., MPH, visiting associate professor of health and environmental studies, Illinois Wesleyan University

Facilitator: Abigail Jahiel, Ph.D. Director of the environmental Studies Program, Illinois Wesleyan University

Everyone is welcome to attend!

Don't miss this opportunity to learn how you can make a difference!

CLEANING OUR WATER: THE RIPPLE EFFECT — CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

especially after rains. Sixty percent of all water pollutants nationwide are contributed by contaminants from our streets and yards. **Be Yard Smart — Reduce Yard Chemicals.** Choose eco-friendly products like corn gluten and compost that break down slowly and harmlessly (see www.ecologyactioncenter.org.) At least avoid applying lawn chemicals before a storm. Ideally, replace some lawn with native plants which thrive locally without chemicals or watering.

Oily Plastic Bottle: Today 74 percent of Americans drink bottled water, even though 40 percent of this is actually tap water, and actually less regulated. This bottle addiction uses 37 billion plastic bottles yearly, made with 47 million gallons of oil. A shocking 86 percent of plastic bottles are not recycled, and some end up trashing the ocean, like the garbage patch twice the size of Texas in the Pacific. Additionally, bottled water corporations are tapping dwindling fresh water supplies from local communities. **Think Outside the Bottle.** When possible, choose tap water over bottled. Tote a reusable bottle. At home replace bottled water with a tap filter; research contaminants in your water using the Water Quality Report from your local water utility, and find the best filter to remove them. Finally, support funding to protect your local watershed and water treatment system. See www.foodandwaterwatch.org or www.thinkoutsidethebottle.org.

Fishy Lump of Coal —“Oily” fish is good brain food but pregnant women are warned not to eat it because neurotoxic mercury may harm their unborn baby's brain. Crazy. How did mercury get into fish? Big fish ate littler fish that lived in waters contaminated with mercury. How did mercury get into the water? Coal. U.S. power plants spew over 40 percent of U.S. mercury emissions, since coal produces half our electricity. **Power Down the Coal Rush.** To help get fish back on menus, conserve energy and choosing energy efficient appliances and lights. Support cleaner technologies for existing coal-fired power plants which can get 90 percent of mercury out of emissions. Better yet, support even cleaner, greener energy, such as wind and solar.

Medicine Cabinet: As noted above, our waters contain traces of many pharmaceuticals, both from human and animal use. Disturbing effects on aquatic life include feminization of fish and poor wound healing. Effects on humans are less well known. **Mind Your Meds — Don't Rush to Flush drugs down the toilet.** Buy only meds you need. When possible take unused drugs to a permanent facility or hazardous waste collection (in Illinois see www.pairierivers.org). As a last resort, mix pills in a plastic bag with undesirable substance (cat litter, coffee grounds), double bag and throw in trash. See http://www.fda.gov/consumer/updates/drug_disposal062308.html

A mere 1 percent of water on our blue planet is available for human use. Experts warn that the next wars will be fought over this precious water, and they've already begun. Fortunately there's plenty we can do to protect water. Start by skipping a rock. And you'll be reminded that one tiny skip makes the whole river quiver — makes a difference. How clean are your ripples?

References available at www.iwu.edu/~wellness



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Workshop Schedule

Saturday, April 18, Shirk Center Classrooms

Come join an array of presenters as they explore some of the hottest topics related to Green and Healthy Living. Everyone is Welcome!

TIME	NORTH CLASSROOM	SOUTH CLASSROOM
9:30 AM	<p>Eden Energy Medicine for Vibrant Health Kathryn Tornquist Keeping your body's nine energy systems humming along supports vibrant wellness physically, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually. Come discover simple tools, including Donna Eden's five minute energy fitness practice, to balance your basic energies.</p>	<p>Sustaining Your Spirit — Embracing What “is” With Energy & Passion! Debbie Delgado How can you sustain your energy, passion, and focus with all that's going on in our society today? The answers and strategies may surprise you!</p>
10:30 AM	<p>Rain Gardens Cathy Walker-Billow Rain Gardens make good use of rainwater, conserve precious water supplies and help protect the water quality of downstream lakes, rivers and the Gulf of Mexico! In this workshop you will learn more about how landscaping directly effects water quality and conservation. Also, learn how to build and maintain your own Rain Garden.</p>	<p>Are we finally escaping “Affluenza?” Nancy A. Dietrich Watch a portion of the classic film on consumerism, “Affluenza,” learn ways to combat materialism, and discuss whether our society has reached the point of “enough.”</p>
11:30 AM	<p>Navigating the Way to Cleaner Water: The Illinois Buffer Initiative CiCi Chalus So you're going green? Learn how Trees Forever has been greening the Illinois landscape and contributing to watershed enhancements through conservations buffers and agroforestry options.</p>	<p>Combining Organic and Sustainable Methods of Gardening with Therapeutic Gardens Mariellen Griffith & Jerry Swartz Methods of organic and sustainable gardening techniques will be presented with therapeutic horticultural therapy philosophy.</p>
12:30 PM	<p>The Good, The Bad, and the Ugly... The Mackinaw River and its importance in McLean County Mary Jo Adams The Mackinaw River is a “jewel” or a river. As good as it is, however, there are serious threats to its overall health and it deserves to be protected.</p>	<p>A Consumers Guide to Lowering Energy Costs Rebecca Devens A representative from Citizens Utility Board will speak about saving money and energy, assistance programs to help you become more efficient, and will address Illinois clean energy policy.</p>
1:30 PM	<p>Energy Efficiency in Your Existing Home Andy Scott You've seen the hints on how to save energy. With this workshop, we'll dig a little deeper as we explore the benefits of an energy efficient home.</p>	<p>Living Downstream — Where the River Meets the Sea Kristian Anders Gustavson Problems on our coasts do not start there; in order to address degradation of our oceans, we must first look upstream.</p>
2:30 PM	<p>FLOW Irena Salina's award-winning documentary investigation into what experts label the most important political and environmental issue of the 21st Century—The World Water Crisis. Salina builds a case against the growing privatization of the world's dwindling fresh water supply with an unflinching focus on politics, pollution, human rights, and the emergence of a domineering world water cartel. <i>Not to be missed!</i></p>	<p>Rain Water Harvesting: Rain Barrels and Beyond Austin Grammer Learn about rainwater harvesting and how Rain Barrels can help keep your plants looking great all summer long. Gain valuable insight into current water issues and the positive impact you can make on the environment through wise water use.</p>

MINI “FREE-4-ALL”

Don't throw it away! Give it away!

This year, there will be an exciting new addition to the **Illinois Sustainable Living and Wellness Expo, Friday, April 17 & Saturday, April 18!** In the tradition of Ecology Action Center's semi-annual FREE-4-ALL, we will be giving you an opportunity to give away your unwanted stuff and to take what you like — FOR FREE! Here are the rules:

FREE-4-ALL Household Décor Giveaway

Please Bring:

- knick-knacks, lamps, vases, paintings, prints etc.
- No large furniture
- Items must be clean and in good condition

And for the Kids! FREE-4-ALL toy Giveaway!

Bring in your gently used toys to give away to others! You may also take what you like, all for free.

- Toys must be in good shape (all parts and pieces etc.) and clean.

Please bring house décor or toys that deserve a second life to the IWU Wellness Office by April 9th.

Please contact us with questions, x3334 or wellness@iwu.edu.

Please NO clothing!

The Ecology Action Center's upcoming FREE-4-ALL, scheduled for later this Spring, will offer you an opportunity to giveaway just about anything you have, including clothes.

**For more info about the
Expo go to:
www.islwe.org**

