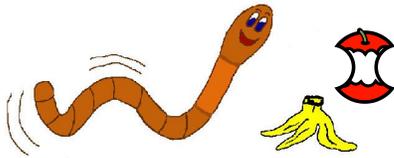




Larry Walsh  
County Executive

# ENVIRONEWS

Environmental News for Will County Schools  
From the Will County Land Use Department/Resource Recovery & Energy Division  
Winter 2012



## Worms Eat My Garbage

Will County is proud to offer vermicomposting (worm) bins to teachers. Since Will County created this grant program in September, we have provided seven bins to various classrooms ranging from preschool to junior high.

Worms will break down vegetable and fruit scraps into a fine, nutrient rich fertilizer that can be used in gardens and house plants. Students will delight in seeing the remains of their apples and carrot sticks “disappear” as they decompose and the red wigglers devour them!

Although the original deadline (December) for applying for the bin has passed, we are happy to announce that we are able to provide bins until February 1, 2012. The application can be found at [www.willcountygrown.com](http://www.willcountygrown.com). Scroll to the middle of the home page and click on the green bin.

The grant consists of personal delivery and brief instruction on:

- One ready-to-start vermicomposting bin
- Red wiggler worms and bin bedding
- Vermicomposting book



*Students at Pilcher Park, Joliet Park District, check out the worms!*



*Kevin Maximo, a student at Gompers Junior High, feeds the classroom worms.*

All that we require is that participating teachers complete two questionnaires and evaluations during the program.

For the remainder of this school year, we will only be able to provide one worm bin per school. But for those schools with active worm bins, we would encourage you to consider splitting your population of worms with another teacher and creating a new bin.

Just think of the healthy snacks your students will bring to school!

*Check out this link to see how worm composting can be used to fulfill a wide range of state learning standards:*

[http://www.willcountygrown.com/education/composting\\_in\\_the\\_classroom.aspx](http://www.willcountygrown.com/education/composting_in_the_classroom.aspx)

## Earth Flag Schools Are Busy!



### Hilda Walker Intermediate School, Summit Hill School District 161

**Planting:** Club members of the Horticulture/Garden Club have been busy planting native species not only on the school property but throughout the Park District to attract butterflies.

**Litter Reduction:** Students recovered litter from the school grounds and created a display demonstrating how the litter could have been recycled or reused.

**Endangered animals:** In addition, club members have used recyclable materials to create replicas of endangered animals or species. These replicas were on display at the school for all students to see.

**Recycling:** Club sponsor, Patricia Pfeiffer, reports that the school also recycles ink and laser cartridges, cell phones, and plastic containers.

### Creekside School, Plainfield School District 202

Under the leadership of teacher Jenifer Garlitz, the Environmental Club has embarked on a number of new projects.

**Vermicomposting:** Through the Will County grant program, the club members received their worm bin and started adding food scraps to make nutrient-rich compost. The worm castings were later added to their school gardening project as natural fertilizer.

**Gardening:** The club constructed cold-frame gardens (mini-greenhouses). Last spring they prepared the soil and planted the seeds. By the end of the school year, they were able to harvest spinach and radishes that enthusiastic members shared in a veggie feast!



### Gompers Junior High School, Joliet School District 86

**Paperless Days:** The school building leadership team voted this fall to have paperless Wednesdays throughout the school to cut down on paper use. As a school with an enrollment of over 900 students and over 75 staff members, the year-end analysis should reveal some serious paper reduction. We know they will be saving trees!

**Hermansen Elementary School** in Bolingbrook is proud to display its green efforts. An entire wall of the fifth grade corridor is dedicated to promoting environmental programs. Will County is especially pleased to be featured so prominently with both our logo and the Earth Flag. Keep up the great work, Hermansen.





## Will County's 2012 Book Recycling Event

*We need your books!*

Reuse Event  
Open to the  
Public  
June 8-10

This year we are offering schools and libraries a 10-day opportunity to drop off unwanted books for reuse or recycling. This provides a great event for Earth Flag award participants. Will County will recognize your efforts and will acknowledge the contribution towards your Earth Flag accreditation. Donations made by students and families from a school will also be counted toward the school's contribution.

This program is entirely free. Please note, however, that schools and libraries **must** unload their own books and bring them inside the Nature Center.

**WHEN:** June 1 — June 10, 2012  
9 am to 4 pm

**WHERE:** Joliet Park District's  
Pilcher Park Nature Center  
2501 Highland Park Drive, Joliet

**DIRECTIONS:** Take Route 30 Cass St. to Highland Park Drive, Pilcher Park. Follow signs to Nature Center building.



Event Sponsor: Will County Land Use Department, Resource Recovery and Energy Division  
Visit: [www.willcountygreen.com](http://www.willcountygreen.com) or call 815-727-8834 for more information.  
Location Sponsor: Joliet Park District, Pilcher Park Nature Center

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## Keep Electronics out of the Garbage!

Unfortunately, 90% of outdated electronics are thrown out with the garbage, where they can have a devastating impact on the environment. The good news is that as of January 1, 2012, the state of Illinois has prohibited many electronic from being placed in the landfills. There are recycling programs that carefully separate the good from the bad and bundle them for destruction or reuse.

Will County has been proactive in preparing for this ban by working with municipalities and townships since 2007 to offer permanent electronic recycling drop-off sites across the county for the convenience of residents. The county currently operates 13 permanent electronic recycling sites and works closely with Vintage Tech Recyclers in Romeoville to provide this service at no cost to taxpayers.

This public-private partnership between Will County and Vintage Tech is the first of its kind in the nation that allows for FREE front door pick-up of electronic recycling items.

This program was made possible by the innovative arrangements that Vintage Tech has made with industry manufacturers and has no added cost to local taxpayers.

Check out [willcountygreen.com](http://willcountygreen.com) for details and locations for electronics recycling in our county.



# Save the Date!

**Saturday, May 19, 2012**  
**Joliet Junior College**  
**Houbolt Road**  
*(new 2012 location)*  
**9 am—7 pm**

This free public event is Will County's premier sustainability fest, allowing attendees to dispose of and recycle a variety of items, and then enjoy organic foods, live music, informative how-to workshops, yoga classes, and other fun and healthy activities for the whole family. The festival includes eco-friendly exhibits—everything from all-natural body care products and organic cotton clothing to energy-efficient home and green building products. Last year, more than 4,000 individuals experienced this unique event.



At a time of unprecedented focus on the economy, "GR2012" will offer workshops and exhibitors with great ideas to go green on a tight budget. Plus, participants will see the latest developments in renewable energy and green technology.

"GR2012" is a collaborative effort of the Forest Preserve District of Will County, Will County Land Use, the City of Joliet, Joliet Junior College, Joliet Park District, Joliet Public School District 86, University of Illinois Extension, Joliet Job Corps and Joliet Township Government.

*Please POST for faculty or pass to Environmental Teacher/Club*

**FROM:**  
**www.willcountygreen.com**  
**Will County Land Use Department**  
**Resource Recovery and Energy Division**  
**58 East Clinton**  
**Joliet IL, 60432**

**TO:**



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