

Prairie River Notes

A publication of Prairie Rivers Network

Volume 10, Issue 3

The Illinois Affiliate of the National Wildlife Federation

Fall 2008

PRN Launches Redesigned www.prairierivers.org

Prairie Rivers Network is very proud to announce the launch of our new website. We hope you take a few moments, right now, to go online and check it out.

Our website contains a wealth of information, from the history of Prairie Rivers Network, to general river facts, to how to install a rain garden. Users will be able to find detailed information on what PRN is doing to protect clean water, prevent water pollution, protect nature, and ensure enough water is available for the people and wildlife that depend on it.

The new website includes a feature allowing our members to post comments on issues that are important to them. Just click on the comment link at the end of each article to weigh in on the issue.

You can also view our online events calendar, sign up for our e-mail list, and donate online.



While you are online visiting our site, help us spread the word about PRN's important work by inviting your friends and family to visit our site and learn more about how to protect clean water for people, fish, and wildlife.

Thank You Royse Wagner, Inc.

PRN thanks Jill Wagner of Royse Wagner, Inc. and her creative team, including Jason Ross and Chad McKenzie for their talent, hard work, and patience. The team at Royse Wagner has put in hundreds of hours, free of charge, to help us with our marketing needs, including our new website. We will be unveiling more of their creative work at our annual dinner, see page 2.

For the past 15 years, Royse Wagner, Inc., has been creating advertising and marketing that gets results. They combine gut instincts with a healthy dose of logic, research, and strategic direction. Visit www.roysewagner.com to learn more.

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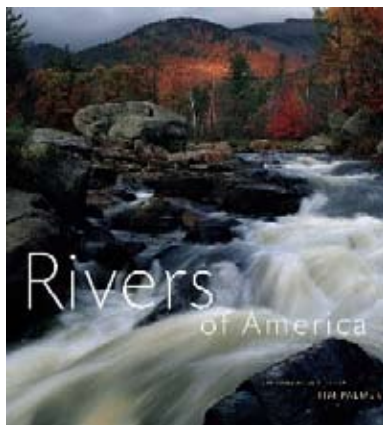
Annual Fundraising Dinner: NOVEMBER 21

Celebrating Our Work to Protect Illinois Rivers for People, Fish, and Wildlife

Prairie Rivers Network's annual dinner will be held on Friday, November 21st at the brand new I-Hotel and Conference Center in Champaign.

Our keynote speaker will be Tim Palmer, an award-winning author and an accomplished photographer. His work combines his love of rivers and nature with his drive for creative expression and his deep commitment to conservation.

Tim is a dynamic and inspiring speaker and will present a vivid personal journey about his passion for rivers and their crucial importance to all of life, as well as display photos that capture the magic of rivers.



www.TimPalmer.org

This year's program features success stories, an introduction to our new Executive Director, Glynnis Collins, and our River Raffle. No, we will not raffle off a river, but you may win one of the following:

- a rain barrel courtesy of Austin Grammer at Prairie Rain Harvester.com (www.prairierainharvester.com)
- wine gift basket courtesy of Sun Singers Wine (www.sunsingerwines.com)
- energy efficient gifts courtesy of Do It Best Hardware
- gift certificate to Champaign Surplus (www.champaignsurplus.com)
- gift certificate to Kickapoo Landing (www.kickapoolanding.com)

We will kick off our cocktail reception at 6 p.m. with music from The Farmer's Market String Band, which includes Tom Bassett, a Prairie Rivers Network member for the past 10 years!

Invitations will be mailed in mid-October.

We hope to see you and a friend there!

River Steward Award

It is time once again to celebrate and elevate the important work of an individual whose work to protect the state's rivers and streams inspires us. Every year at our annual dinner we take a moment to recognize one of the many dedicated citizen volunteers around our state who spends countless hours working to protect Illinois' rivers.

These people educate us; they do the legwork; they speak the unpopular truths; they go above and beyond. Too often, their

outstanding efforts and successes are not known outside of their local community. Prairie Rivers Network wants to recognize and celebrate the people who make these achievements possible, sharing their victories and inspiring other river advocates around the state.

If you know a citizen volunteer you would like to nominate as the next River Steward, please visit www.prairierivers.org and fill out a nomination form or contact Cecily Smith at csmith@prairierivers.org.



... strives to protect the rivers and streams of Illinois and to promote the lasting health and beauty of watershed communities.

By providing information, sound science, and hands-on assistance, PRN helps individuals and community groups become effective river conservation leaders.

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Capacity Building Workshop: October 10

On October 10th, Prairie Rivers Network will hold a forum to further an on-going discussion about how we can build the technical capacity of people and groups working to protect Illinois' rivers and streams. All are welcome to attend.

The water pollution issues we face in Illinois are diverse and complex, requiring advocates to possess a broad range of knowledge and skills. Furthermore, technologies, regulations, and approaches are constantly evolving, making it difficult for even the most dedicated conservationists to keep up to speed and make sure their strategies are sound.

Supported by a grant from Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA), PRN is working with the IEPA, U.S. EPA, Hach Environmental, Illinois Lake Management Association, and Tetra Tech, Inc. to develop solutions to this "capacity" problem.

This summer, we developed and distributed a survey to assess the needs of individuals and groups working to protect Illinois waters. We hope to use the information

gathered at our upcoming workshop and through the survey to help answer common questions watershed stakeholders have, such as:

- How can we effectively share information?
- Who else in my area is trying to meet similar goals?
- What success stories are out there for the types of problems I am working on?
- What skills and tools does my group need to make progress?
- What resources are available to help us meet our goals?
- Who else should be involved in my effort?

It's our goal to work collaboratively to improve the ability of Illinois watershed stakeholders to successfully deal with water quality issues.

If you are involved in protecting clean water in Illinois, we invite you to fill out our survey at www.prairierivers.org/survey. For more information about the workshop, e-mail Kim at kerndt@prairierivers.org.

Illinois Water Conference: October 8-9

Join us for a two-day look at the past, present and, most importantly future, of water resources in Illinois. This biennial conference draws agency personnel, academics, students, educators and community members from across the state for a glimpse at the latest scientific discoveries related to our water systems.

Register at: <http://www.iisgcp.org/ilwater/registration.htm>

October 8-9, 2008

Hilton Garden Inn,
Champaign, Illinois

Illinois Paddling Council Season Ender

Established in 1962, the mission of the Illinois Paddling Council (IPC) includes promoting the safe enjoyment of all phases of canoeing and kayaking in Illinois and assuring access to the state's waters.

This year the IPC's Season Ender Paddle will follow a segment of the Lincoln Heritage Canoe Trail, which memorializes an early river journey by Abraham Lincoln on the Sangamon River. The Lincoln Heritage Canoe Trail, dedicated in 1965, is Illinois' first designated river trail.



All are invited to IPC's Season Ender Paddle on October 19th. In addition to an enjoyable paddle with gentle bends and a low gradient, participants can learn more about IPC's success in partnering with the Openlands Project to establish the Northeastern Water Trails System. With the support of paddlers, IPC hopes to expand water trail systems into other areas of the state.

To register for the trip, visit IPC's website at www.illinoispaddling.org, or contact Sigrid Pilgrim at sigpilgr@comcast.net.

PRN Draws Attention to Pollution Risks of New “MEGADAIRY,” Now Under Construction

In January 2008, when the snow was still falling on the rolling, scenic hills of the Apple River watershed east of Galena, Prairie Rivers Network received a call from Trout Unlimited. We were informed that the Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) had received an application from a California dairyman to build what would be the largest dairy in Illinois. The application stated the dairy would



be located approximately 3 miles east of Apple River Canyon State Park, and would house over 10,000 cows on just a few hundred acres. The waste from these cows was predicted to approach 100 million gallons annually, and would require 70 acres of holding ponds. The manure ponds would be located next to a tributary of the Apple River, which means the river could be at risk of becoming significantly polluted in the event of a pond overflow, spill, or illegal discharge. In addition, the underlying aquifer would also probably become contaminated because all ponds leak to some extent.

A group of local citizens (H.O.M.E.S.) concerned about these environmental issues, as well as the likelihood of stench and lowered property values, had already formed to oppose the application. One of our first steps was to contact this group to find out more about the issue and to provide them with technical assistance. We then joined forces with H.O.M.E.S., Trout Unlimited, Environmental Law & Policy Center, and Illinois Environmental Council to strategize and work together.

From January through May, our coalition made repeated efforts to inform the public, IDOA, the Governor's office, and many other government bodies about the potential negative impacts of this “megadairy.” We engaged and mobilized the public statewide by sending out action alerts and publishing Letters to the Editor. We also sent letters to

the Jo Daviess County Board and IDOA, questioning the wisdom of this particular location for this particular facility. H.O.M.E.S. was especially vocal and devoted many, many hours to meetings, phone calls, research, and updating their website. They brought particular attention to the determination by several licensed geologists that the area is underlain by karst topography containing vertical fractures that could contaminate the underlying aquifer if the manure ponds were to leak.

We were successful in that this issue caught the attention and scrutiny of the Lt. Governor's and Attorney General's offices, as well as the media. Because of this attention, IDOA was held more accountable for ensuring proper compliance with state regulations. Unlike most projects which are quietly approved by IDOA without much outside comment or public awareness, IDOA was suddenly under the microscope. But despite all this work and evidence that the dairy may cause significant environmental and economic problems, the building permit was granted and construction has already begun (see picture below).



Why did we not prevail? The Livestock Management Facilities Act is the state legislation governing the construction of dairies and other confined animal feeding operations (CAFOs). This Act contains weak, nebulous language that does little to protect our rivers and lakes from suddenly becoming neighbors to man-made animal sewage ponds. The existence of weak legislation and loopholes is further affirmation of the importance and necessity of our work to protect Illinois' waterways. Prairie Rivers Network will continue to provide assistance to residents living near existing and proposed CAFOs, and we will work to reform state law so that our waterways have clear protections.

PRN Garner's Support from Citizens and Elected Officials to Restore DNR Funding

On July 11th, Governor Blagojevich cut \$14 million from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (DNR) budget. Some of the impacts of this drastic reduction were initially obvious: the cuts eliminated all of the annual funding for the Wildlife Prairie Park in Champaign; they also eliminated all of the funding for the third and final year of a regional water supply planning program. Staffing cuts would be deep in some departments, such as the Office of Realty and Environmental Planning (40%) and the Office of Water Resources (19%).

Other impacts, such as the decision to close 24 state parks and historic sites, although coming weeks later, have only underscored the original questions of how our state natural resources are to be adequately protected and managed, and why the public should have to suffer by being denied access to some of our state's most popular outdoor treasures.

In response to the governor's budget cuts, Prairie Rivers Network partnered with the Illinois Environmental Council, Sierra Club, Openlands Project and other environmental groups to hold press conferences at state parks throughout Illinois on July 22nd. The purpose of the press conferences was to draw attention to what the DNR budget cuts mean for Illinois residents: the loss of access to what for many citizens are the only public natural areas in which they can enjoy outdoor activities ranging from hiking to paddling to fishing; the inability of DNR to ensure adequate protection and management of valuable natural resources; the elimination of staff who carry out needed water surveys of thousands of miles of state rivers and streams. At many of these press events, elected officials attended to offer their support for Illinois state parks and to voice their commitment to restoring DNR funding.

Included in the budget cuts was \$2.1 million allocated for the third and final year of two pilot programs for regional

water supply planning. In 2006, Governor Blagojevich issued Executive Order 2006-1 authorizing DNR to oversee a three-year regional water supply planning process with the assistance of the Illinois State Water and Geological Surveys. In the Governor's own words, "It is critical for Illinois to get ahead of the curve when it comes to water supply planning."

The efforts of the Northeast and East Central regional water supply planning committees have been derailed by the complete loss of funding for the final year of the planning process. While each committee has received reports that

forecast future demands and water withdrawals, the final year's funds were to pay for studies by the Water Survey on impacts of these withdrawals on surface and groundwater supplies. Without full funding for the Water Survey's research, information integral to an accurate and complete report, and planning necessary to meet the water supply needs of

people and wildlife will be missing from the planning process.

During a one-day session on September 10th, the House unanimously passed an amended version of Senate Bill 1103, which restores \$2.4 million dollars to the Historic Preservation Agency and \$2.1 million dollars to DNR for the purpose of funding personal services and preventing the layoff of "frontline staff" and closure of historic sites and state parks. No funds were restored to complete the remaining research needed for the regional water supply planning efforts. Unfortunately, the House vote on S.B. 1103 will be meaningless unless the Senate also votes to pass the bill.

PRN urges its members to pressure your senators to pass S.B. 1103 as a start towards restoring the funds needed for managing our state park and water resources.



illinois' ride for the environment



THANK YOU!

to our many Sponsors,
Volunteers, and Participants

for supporting the 2008 Rolling on
the River event!



Special thanks to: Lieutenant Governor Pat Quinn • Representative Tom Cross • Yorkville Mayor Valerie Burd • Plano Mayor Bill Roberts.

And to our title sponsor Rush-Copley—thank you for your continued leadership in supporting a more healthful environment!

Thanks to you we raised over
\$100,000 and welcomed more than
500 cyclists and **100+ volunteers**.

Thank you to these major sponsors



Photograph courtesy of NequAmerica

Equality Illinois—Largest Team & Top Fundraising Team

Thank you to these sponsors & partners

- | | | |
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| Vision Quest Coaching | 100R/Silver Springs State Park | Dan Curi |
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| League of Illinois Bicyclists | Rush-Copley Healthplex | |



Join Prairie Rivers Network!

or Give a Gift Membership!

Looking for the Perfect Gift?

A membership to PRN is the perfect gift for avid hikers, fishermen, paddlers, birders, or anyone who is concerned about the health of Illinois' rivers and streams. A one-year gift membership includes quarterly newsletters, action alerts and the knowledge that you are helping to protect the environment of Illinois. We will send a card announcing your gift. For those giving a gift membership of \$100 or more, we send *Paddling Illinois*, a 153 page book with detailed paddling information for Illinois' rivers and streams.

Yes, I want to help protect our rivers and streams.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="radio"/> \$15 Student Membership | <input type="radio"/> \$25 Basic Membership |
| <input type="radio"/> \$50 <input type="radio"/> \$100 | <input type="radio"/> \$250 <input type="radio"/> \$500 |
| <input type="radio"/> Other \$ _____ | |

Name: _____

Address: _____

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Phone: _____

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Thank you for your support!

All members receive our newsletter and action alerts. Your contribution to Prairie Rivers is tax deductible.

Make checks payable to: Prairie Rivers Network, 1902 Fox Drive, Suite G, Champaign, IL 61820

Thank You!



Prairie Rivers Network would like to thank Sleepy Creek Vineyards for choosing PRN as the beneficiary of their Salt Fork Arts Festival.

www.sleepycreekvineyards.com

Prairie Rivers Network would also like to thank the band Zmick for selecting PRN to sponsor, and benefit from, their Monday Night Miracle at the Canopy Club.



www.zmick.net

PRN Welcomes Cecily Smith



PRN would like to welcome one of our long time volunteers and interim staff, Cecily Smith as our full-time Policy and Outreach Specialist. In addition to promoting river stewardship and helping individuals and community groups

become effective conservation leaders, Cecily is partnering with other not-for-profits, and state and federal agencies to educate the public and health care providers about how pharmaceuticals enter our rivers, how these chemicals harm fish and wildlife, and what disposal solutions are available. Cecily has a B.A. in English, a J.D., and a Masters in Public Administration with an emphasis in environmental policy.

PRN Welcomes Steph Adams

PRN would like to welcome Steph Adams as our new Development Coordinator. Steph comes to us with many years of development, outreach, and public relations experience. Steph is currently promoting PRN and our work through several special events and is



coordinating our sponsorship efforts to help cover the costs for our annual dinner. She is also working to expand our communication efforts and find new sources of funding to expand our work in river education, water supply planning, and drainage reform. Steph has a B.S. in Economics and an M.A in Public Policy Analysis. We welcome Steph to our team.

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Mark Your Calendar!

Sportsman Summit on Clean Water Issues

October 4, 2008

Starved Rock State Park, Utica, IL

Contact Brad at bwalker@prairierivers.org or
(618) 541-0778

Illinois Water Conference

October 8-9, 2008

Hilton Garden Inn, Champaign, IL

www.iisgcp.org/ilwater/registration.htm

Workshop: "Assessing the Capacity of Illinois' Watersheds"

October 10, 2008

Contact: Kim Erndt at kerndt@prairierivers.org

Illinois Paddling Council Season Ender

October 19, 2008

www.illinoispaddling.org

PRN Annual Dinner

November 21, 2008

Photo Attributes

Jason Lindsey, www.JasonLindsey.com: pages 4, 5, and border
Steve Holesinger, page 4 (construction photo)

Prairie Rivers Network is a
member of Earth Share of Illinois.
If you participate in a workplace
giving campaign, look for ESI and
you can designate PRN to receive
your contributions.

