



2010 Annual Report

It is a pleasure to share with you the 2010 Annual Report of Prairie Rivers Network. The year has been a good one for us, in terms of our accomplishments, growing membership, expanding programs, and financial health. We remain well-positioned, as 2011 unfolds, to pursue the ambitious goals set forth in our strategic plan. I am proud to be a part of this network, proud to work hand-in-hand with talented staff, dedicated board members, and enthusiastic members to promote clean water, healthy rivers, and vibrant communities throughout Illinois.

– Glynnis Collins, Executive Director



GROWTH AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

In 2010, Prairie Rivers Network continued its sustained records of both significant annual growth and responsible financial management, even in the face of economic recession. Revenue and expenditures trended upward in 2010 with our total expenditures 2% greater than in 2009, even as we maintained an adequate cash reserve. Over the past 10 years, Prairie Rivers Network has experienced an annual average growth rate of 27%, resulting in a larger staff and greater impact of our programs. At the same time our membership has grown to 650 dues-paying members, an all-time high. Our work and operations in 2010 were supported primarily through a combination of grants from private foundations (51% of revenue, including grant funds received earlier for work in 2010), member donations (30%), and a grant from the state of Illinois (11%). 80¢ of each dollar raised directly supported programs to reduce pollution, preserve natural places along rivers, and enhance public awareness of river issues.

Statement of Activities For the Year Ended December 31, 2010

Revenue		Expenses	
Donations	\$154,440	Salaries	\$248,265
Grants	\$163,474	Taxes & Benefits	\$38,661
Investment Income	\$1,506	Direct Program Costs	\$120,193
In-Kind Donations & Reimbursements	\$28,498	Fundraising (with salaries)	\$61,794
Sales & Miscellaneous Revenue	\$14,840	Management/General (with salaries)	\$35,403
Total Revenue	\$362,758	Total Expenses	\$504,316

Net Assets, beginning of year \$361,417

Net Assets, end of year \$219,859

** Our net assets in the beginning of the year includes grant money received in prior years for work completed in 2010 and therefore offsets revenue shortfall for the year as planned. Prairie Rivers Network's finances are audited each year by an independent certified accountant and are available upon request. Our Federal 990 tax forms are also available upon request or through www.guidestar.org.*

2010 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Of course, sound financial management and organizational growth are merely means to an end. They enable us, with increasing effectiveness, to improve the health of Illinois' 120,000 miles of rivers and streams. Below are illustrative examples of our accomplishments in 2010.

Helping curb water pollution. When the Village of Mokena in Will County approached the Illinois EPA about a new water pollution permit for their expanded sewage treatment plant, the agency directed them to Prairie Rivers Network. Our staff talked to village personnel and consultants about plans for the new plant and helped explore ways to expand operations without adding more pollution to nearby Marley Creek. In the end, the Village will employ innovative treatment techniques to minimize water pollution. In 2010, we engaged in similar discussions with three other facilities, ultimately decreasing pollution levels in millions of gallons of wastewater every day.

Bringing new ideas to solve old problems and protect our rivers. When the Asian carp crisis came to a head in November 2009, with the discovery that Asian carp were likely on Lake Michigan's doorstep, Prairie Rivers Network staff were ready to act. We have long been aware that the century-old, man-made canal system in Chicago provides an ecologically damaging pathway for invasive plants and fish to move between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins. The zebra mussel infested the Mississippi basin by migrating through the Chicago canals, at great cost to industry and the public. With many partner organizations, Prairie Rivers Network reached out to the City of Chicago, state, and national leaders in the early days of the Asian carp crisis, resulting in two critical developments: (1) a serious commitment by state and federal officials to address the problem, and (2) a general understanding that restoring the natural divide between the basins is the only likely long-term solution to the problem. Without the involvement of Prairie Rivers Network and others, the responsible governments would have remained focused, as they have been for over a decade, on half-measures doomed to fail in the long run.

Empowering people to protect rivers in their own backyards. Coal mining in Illinois is again on the rise, and with it comes serious water pollution problems. The causes of this revival: technological advances in longwall mining (used to mine coal under flat terrain); advances in air pollution controls that allow US power plants to burn Illinois' dirty coal; and, ironically, victories by environmental advocates in Appalachia against mountaintop removal coal mining. The land subsidence caused by longwall mining can harm water flows in many ways (along with farming operations, roads, wildlife habitat, and more). The coal processing—particularly coal-washing—generates considerable pollution. Further, our 22 coal-fired power plants are under regulated. In 2010, we significantly increased our efforts to help citizens living near coal mines and ash-disposal pits gain accurate information about environmental and health threats in their communities. We also took our voices to regulators with the authority to address the problems. We are proud of our leadership role in forming the Heartland Coalfield Alliance, a group of over 20 organizations and citizens pressing for a just transition to a sustainable energy future.



GOALS FOR 2011

With support of our members and donors in 2011 we plan to continue reducing water pollution and improving overall river health throughout Illinois. Along with the above-described work we will pursue various overall goals, particularly the following:

Ensure that existing clean water laws are enforced. Prairie Rivers Network will continue to identify the worst polluters in the state and push them to improve, taking matters to court if necessary. In particular we'll be pressing to get Chicago's Metropolitan Water Reclamation District to comply with its water-pollution permits. This kind of work—"watchdogging" water pollution permits and bringing permit violators into compliance—not only solves individual pollution problems; it also sends the message to industry throughout Illinois that someone is paying attention, raising the bar for compliance statewide.

Reduce pollution from farming. Nutrient pollution from row-crop production and factory farms pollutes Illinois rivers and waters as far away as the Gulf of Mexico. Unfortunately, these pollution sources are not subject to regulatory controls, so we must use different approaches to curtail this problem. In 2011, we will continue to work on several fronts to curb water pollution from farming by:

- (1) pressing for fair and sensible regulatory controls on pollution from farms;
- (2) making sure that incentive-based programs that target farm operations align with clean water goals; and
- (3) working directly with farmers to promote farming practices that lessen pollution.

Protect more natural places along our rivers. Even if there were no more water pollution, an important component of river health would be missing: healthy natural areas along riverbanks. We will work with land owners and land managers along the Mississippi River to help them coordinate conservation along the river to better protect wildlife and river health.

To our members, funders, and supporters, we offer our gratitude for your support. The costs of fighting for a clean, safe environment necessarily fall on the shoulders of people like you. Profits from big business will always ensure loud voices in Springfield and Washington, D.C. for narrow, short-term perspectives that discount or ignore environmental effects. Those representing our rivers are Davids to the well-funded Goliaths; without your financial support, the cause is lost.

If you are just getting to know Prairie Rivers Network, we invite you to take time to learn more. Our website is a good place to start – prairierivers.org. We are always looking to connect with people everywhere who care about clean water, wildlife, and river recreation. On the website you will find information on important issues in Illinois, on ways you can help, and on outings and other events where you can both learn more and meet people who share your conservation and protection interests.

Lastly, our report this year, as in the past, necessarily omits much of what we do and plan to do. Don't hesitate to contact us if you'd like more information.

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Prairie Rivers Network thanks our community partners and encourages our members to support those businesses that protect our environment and thank them for their support.

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