



Protecting Illinois' Rivers For People, Fish, and Wildlife

## INNOVATIVE PATHS TO CLEANER WATER

### Prairie Rivers Network Uses Clean Water Law to Help Communities Reduce Pollution

BY KIM KNOWLES

For nearly ten years, Prairie Rivers Network has been working on strengthening our state's antidegradation law. This law was designed to prevent degradation of clean waters through the promotion of new and innovative water pollution reduction technologies. Prairie Rivers Network was involved in the passing of the law in 2002, and since that time has been helping Illinois communities develop creative solutions to keep pollution out of their waterways.

One form of assistance we offer is education. Prairie Rivers Network has developed several tools for the lay person and the professional. Our guidebooks are accessible to all, with illustrations, examples, and simple explanations of technologies for reducing pollution from sewage treatment

plants and polluted runoff from cities. For professionals, we developed a technical document that provides vital information on state-of-the-art sewage treatment methods. You can visit [prairierivers.org/resources/downloads](http://prairierivers.org/resources/downloads) to view these documents.

Prairie Rivers Network is also working hand-in-hand with communities

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that are building new or redesigned pollution treatment plants to achieve a variety of advances in clean water. For instance, we worked closely with the villages of Chatham and New Berlin on the site plans for a new drinking water treatment plant in the Sangamon River Valley. Because the Sangamon River is already polluted by too much sediment carried to the

river by stormwater and erosion, we developed a plan to keep sediment on the site by using landscape features that allow stormwater to soak into the ground. The plan includes use of porous pavement, bioswales, a bioretention area, native plantings and no-mow areas, as recommended in our stormwater management guidebook.

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## GREETINGS FROM GLYNNIS

A riot of crocuses appeared in my back yard not long ago, stimulated, no doubt, by some roto-tilling as part of a landscaping project last year. By the time you read this, they will have faded, replaced by tulips and bluebells; the magnolias will be in flower, and everywhere, our native redbuds will be starting their Spring display. The transformation of our landscape, of drab patches of earth and muddy riverbanks feels to me like a miracle every year. And the transformation of our daily lives can feel miraculous too, as we unfurl and un-layer our protections against the cold, and like the flowers, stretch out a bit in the sun and embrace the warm breeze. With Spring finally here, I hope you are able to find joy and optimism in your life, despite natural disasters and political upheaval in so many places.

In this Spring edition of Prairie River Notes, you will find many reasons for optimism in our shared effort to improve the health of Illinois rivers for ourselves and for future generations. Stacy James writes about our efforts to improve the laws and institutions that regulate factory farm pollution that leads to fish kills and contaminated drinking water (p 3). Kim Knowles writes about victories we have achieved by working with industrial polluters and sewage treatment plants, helping them adopt innovative ways to reduce pollution from their facilities (p 1). Brian Perbix tells us about his work with people living near polluting coal mines and coal ash disposal sites, and how we are helping them have more of a say in the decisions that are af-



fecting their water and quality of life (p 6). And finally, Traci Barkley tells us about the newly-formed Heartland Coalfield Alliance, a regional coalition supporting a transition away from polluting coal-based energy – the Alliance will provide a counter balance to the extremely well-funded and influential coal industry lobby (p 4).

You will also see, in our 2010 Annual Report, cause for optimism in Prairie Rivers Network – a strong organization, in good financial shape, with a strong base of loyal supporters, a great track record and plans for even better things in the future.

Thanks to all of you -- your support makes what we do possible.

With best wishes,

Glynnis Collins,  
Executive Director

P.S. Don't forget to check out our events calendar on the back page – take advantage of the opportunity to get out with Prairie Rivers staff and other river lovers like you!

## prairieriversnetwork

...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, Prairie Rivers Network helps individuals and community groups become effective river conservation leaders.

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## AN OPEN LETTER TO PRAIRIE RIVERS NETWORK STAFF AND MEMBERS

FROM CAROL WOCK, MEMBER

Dear Prairie Rivers Network and Fellow Members,

Enclosed with this letter is a contribution to Prairie Rivers Network, which I give in addition to my annual donation. I thought it might interest some Prairie Rivers Network members to know why I've sent this check and why I hope others will follow my lead.

The federal government has seen fit to enact a complex tax law to boost the economy and reduce suffering. I'm pleased that, as part of the legislative deal, unemployment benefits have been extended, helping those most hurt by our financial mess. I'm also glad that middle class taxpayers who need a break will receive it. What I find morally troubling are the substantial tax breaks extended to wealthy people who do not need them, fueling budget deficits while doing little for the economy. Is there any end to our greed?

I have a plan to help this situation in a small but meaningful way. Those of us (at any tax level) who don't really need this government largesse can put our tax savings to work by donating the money. I for one am embarrassed by my tax break, given our nation's problems. All of my money is going to Prairie Rivers Network.

I invite all Prairie Rivers Network members to join me in diverting their tax savings in the same way. Prairie Rivers Network can put the money to good use, helping the environment while also stimulating the economy.

Sincerely,

Carol Wock



## PRAIRIE RIVERS NETWORK SUPPORTS BILL TO MAKE FACTORY FARMS PAY FOR THEIR PERMIT TO POLLUTE

BY STACY JAMES

On March 17, I testified on behalf of Prairie Rivers Network before the Illinois Senate Environment Committee in support of Senate Bill 2209. The bill establishes a fee for water pollution permits issued by the Illinois EPA to factory farms (also known as concentrated animal feeding operations or "CAFOs"). Prairie Rivers Network has been working with Environment Illinois and Illinois Citizens for Clean Air & Water to introduce and pass this bill.

In my testimony, I shared how factory farms have posed and will continue to pose a pollution threat to clean

water. A long history of discharges, fish kills, citizen accounts, and Illinois EPA reports confirms this. I urged senators to support SB2209, which requires factory farms to join the ranks of all other polluters and pay a fee for their permits. Other dischargers pay anywhere from \$250 to \$50,000. Factory farms pay nothing. It is neither necessary nor appropriate for factory farms to receive special privilege and for Illinois EPA's factory farm program to be subsidized by the other polluters.

We thank Senator Silverstein for sponsoring SB2209, and Representative Tryon for sponsoring the House version of the bill

(HB3504). The future of these bills is uncertain because they have not passed out of committee. We will continue working on their passage, while simultaneously informing legislators of the pollution risks posed by factory farms.//

### How Can You Help?

Contact your State Senator and Representative and ask them to support SB2209 and HB3504, respectively.



## HEARTLAND COALFIELD ALLIANCE UNITES GROUPS WORKING TO MOVE BEYOND COAL

BY TRACI BARKLEY

In December 2010, Prairie Rivers Network convened representatives from several citizen-led groups who are working to protect their land, water and communities from the ravages of coal mining, and invited legal and scientific experts to strategize as part of a two-day “coal summit.”

On the first day, environmental advocates and citizens developed strategies to improve the effectiveness of a “beyond coal” movement through shared goals and collaboration. On the second day, lawyers and organizational advocates focused on legal strategies to improve how regulators carry out and enforce the Clean Water Act and the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act.

As a result of the first Illinois coal summit, The Heartland Coalfield Alliance was born. The Alliance’s 22 (and growing!) members share a vision to “make a just transition from a coal economy to a clean energy and sustainable economy in America’s Heartland.” In support of the vision, the Alliance has stated goals to:

- (1) build the movement of “beyond coal” advocates;
- (2) support ongoing efforts to reduce coal impacts; and
- (3) develop a roadmap for a transition from a coal-based to a clean energy economy.

In just a few short months, the Heartland Coalfield Alliance has launched a website [www.heartlandcoalfieldalliance.org](http://www.heartlandcoalfieldalliance.org), built partnerships with other regional and national beyond coal advocates, organized two coal mining tours to educate activists about damage caused by coal, and started work with a state legislator to investigate the extent of state subsidies to the coal industry.

The Alliance has defined the “heartland” as the Illinois coal basin, which includes most of Illinois, and parts of Indiana

and Kentucky. The Illinois coal basin is ground zero in the nation’s challenge to move toward clean energy. Organizing the many communities and groups engaged on this issue is an essential component of our larger effort to use advocacy and legal tools to reduce the harmful impacts from the coal industry on drinking water, rivers and wetlands, and the natural wealth of Illinois.

### What is “Beyond Coal”?

Beyond coal advocates are working to stop the growth of coal mining and coal-fired power sources, clean up existing coal pollution sites and move toward cleaner energy alternatives.

**Fact:** Coal provides about half (47%) of Illinois’ electricity.

**Fact:** Coal is responsible for 93% of the sulfur dioxide and 80% of the nitrogen oxide emissions that contribute to climate change.

**Fact:** Coal waste from the mining, washing and burning of coal has been found to leak through unlined containment ponds to pollute the surrounding environment and groundwater with elements like lead, mercury and arsenic.

**Fact:** There are nearly 100 coal ash waste dumps in Illinois—with more contamination sites identified in Illinois than any other state.

Prairie Rivers Network would like to thank those who are making this important work possible. We are grateful for all those who responded to last year’s special appeal. Your dollars made all of this possible.

Heartland Coalfield Alliance is: Prairie Rivers Network ▪ IL Chapter of the Sierra Club ▪ Sierra Student Coalition ▪ IN Chapter of the Sierra Club ▪ Hoosier Environmental Council ▪ Eco-Justice Collaborative Faith in Place ▪ Coal-Free Future Project/Jeff Biggers ▪ Citizens Coal Council ▪ Environmental Integrity Project ▪ Canton Area Citizens for Environmental Issues ▪ Citizens Against Longwall Mining ▪ Stand Up To Coal ▪ Climate Action St. Louis//



Coal processing plant in Central Illinois



# 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

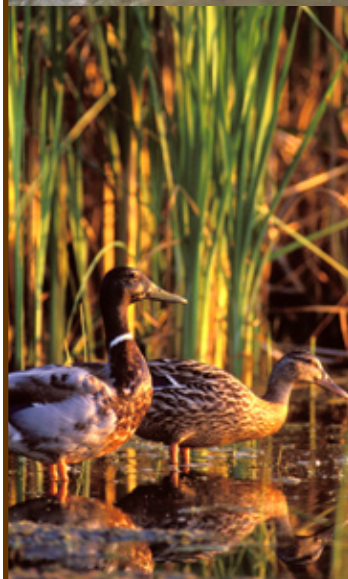
Net Assets, end of year \$219,859

*\* 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](http://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.

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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](http://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.



## Business Members

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.

### Headwaters Circle \$5,000+

McKenzie Wagner, Inc.\*

### River Protectors \$1,000 to \$2,499

Champaign Surplus\*  
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Champaign Surplus  
Sleepy Creek Vineyards  
Upclose Printing and Marketing\*

### River Stewards \$500 to \$999

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### River Guardians \$250 to \$499

Blue Moon Farm  
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International Galleries\*  
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### River Sustainers \$100 to \$249

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### Friends \$50 - \$99

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Rollins Aquatic Solutions, Inc.  
The Great Pumpkin Patch\*

### Members \$1 - \$49

Espresso Royale\*  
Heartland Gallery  
International Galleries  
Planet, Inc.\*

## Group Members

Champaign County Audubon Society  
Champaign Public Library  
Common Ground Food Co-Op  
Middlefork Audubon Society  
Northwest Illinois Audubon Society  
Quad City Conservation Alliance  
River Corps of Discovery\*  
Salt Creek Watershed Network  
Sierra Club, Prairie Group

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We apologize for any errors or omissions and urge you to notify us of any mistakes.



## PRAIRIE RIVERS NETWORK TO SUE CHICAGO POLLUTER

BY KIM KNOWLES

Prairie Rivers Network has joined with the Natural Resources Defense Council and the Sierra Club in notifying the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) that it intends to sue the District for illegally dumping pollution into Chicago area waters. Because the District is so big (its sewage treatment plants release billions of gallons of wastewater every day), the pollution is fouling waterways all the way from Chicago to the Gulf of Mexico.

The notification of intent to sue is the first formal step toward a lawsuit in federal court. Prairie Rivers Network and its partners are threatening a lawsuit because MWRD has steadfastly refused to remove phosphorus to safe levels. Too much phosphorus can be deadly to fish because it triggers the unnatural growth of algae. Algae then suck the oxygen out of the water, depriving fish and other life of the ability to breathe. Phosphorus from MWRD is helping cause the Dead Zone, a huge area in the Gulf of Mexico where fish and other forms of life cannot survive, because there's not enough oxygen. Prairie Rivers Network is demanding that MWRD remove phosphorus to make the waters safe.

In addition to refusing to remove phosphorus, MWRD is allowing untreated sewage to flow into Chicago area

waters. Untreated sewage also leads to low oxygen, because as microscopic bugs eat the raw sewage, they use up oxygen so it is not available for fish.

The release of raw sewage is a serious problem in Chicago and other older cities, where sewer systems channel rainwater and sewage into the same pipes. These pipes lead to sewage treatment plants, and during heavy rains, the plants are overwhelmed. Overflow pipes divert the rain and untreated sewage away from the plant and into the Chicago River and Lake Michigan.

Although MWRD believes that its Tunnel and Reservoir Plan (TARP) will resolve the sewage overflow problem, the decades-old project has cost taxpayers more than \$3 billion dollars to date, and is mired in delay with no end in sight. In the lawsuit, Prairie Rivers Network will seek innovative solutions that complement TARP, such as large-scale green infrastructure projects that use natural systems and materials to hold and clean water in heavy storm events.

Other cities throughout the Midwest, including Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Aurora, Illinois; and Lenexa, Kansas, are using green infrastructure to reduce sewer overflows, improve neighborhoods and reduce sewage treatment costs. We think Chicago should do the same.//

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## BONEYARD CREEK COMMUNITY DAY AND CLEAN UP - April 16th

Prairie Rivers Network is proud to again sponsor the Boneyard Creek Clean-Up. Please grab a friend, put on some old clothes and help clean up one of Champaign County's natural treasures.

Visit [boneyardcreek.org](http://boneyardcreek.org) for more details and to register.



## GRASSROOTS GROUPS FIGHT COAL POLLUTION

BY BRIAN PERBIX

This winter's frigid weather may have kept people indoors, but it didn't stop citizen groups across Illinois fighting coal pollution from working hard to protect their water, land and communities.

### Stand Up To Coal, Vermilion County

[www.standuptocoal.org](http://www.standuptocoal.org)

On March 8th, 2011, farmers and rural residents from the voluntary association Stand Up To Coal took their effort to preserve clean water and prime farmland from a proposed coal mine to the Vermilion County Board.

Supporters from the area where Sunrise Coal, LLC is buying up coal leases boarded a charter bus to attend the meeting. Speakers Kevin Block and Charles Goodall detailed existing damage in other Illinois communities caused by coal mining, toxic coal slurry and coal ash waste disposal, and called on the Board to take strong action to halt threats from new coal mining to the county's economic and natural resources.

Prairie Rivers Network helped Stand Up to Coal members "think outside the box" when approaching the Vermilion County Board, in order to counter Board member arguments that their hands are tied because Vermilion County has no zoning regulations.

"Even without zoning regulations, the Vermilion County Board has opportunities to protect the resources of the county," explains Water Resources Scientist Traci Barkley. "Illinois law authorizes county boards to support county water commissions, control and regulate refuse and waste, prevent water pollution and take ground-water protection measures to protect a public drinking water supply. Further, they can declare their intention to protect the county's

land, water and community health by adopting a resolution while barring subsidies to the coal industry."

Prairie Rivers Network also helped Stand Up To Coal members reach out to the press, ensuring that the Board meeting was covered by the local media, and shared information on possible negative impacts of coal mining on water and land.

Unfortunately, the Board has failed to take any action so far, but Stand Up to Coal members are committed to continue working with them and with municipal governments to protect clean water and community health in Vermilion County.

### Canton Area Citizens for Environmental Issues, Fulton County

[www.savecantonlake.com](http://www.savecantonlake.com)

As they await word from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources' Office of Mines and Minerals on their request for an administrative review of the North Canton Mine Permit, members of Canton Area Citizens for Environmental Issues (CACEI) have been busy building public understanding of and support for their group's mission to protect Canton Lake from strip mining impacts.

An administrative review hearing is the first step in a legal challenge to North Canton Mine's permit to operate. The mine would discharge polluted waste water into Copperas Creek just over a mile upstream of Canton Lake, which is a drinking water source for 20,000 people. Meanwhile, CACEI is remaining active to keep the movement strong while they await the next major strategic move.

In February, CACEI hosted a presentation from award-winning author Jeff Biggers (*Reckoning at*



Larry Schraut, farmer, explaining his concerns about a new underground mine during our recent coal tour.

*Eagle Creek, The United States of Appalachia*). The event drew nearly 60 local residents and stimulated a lively discussion afterwards about the need to move beyond coal while ensuring that employment opportunities from clean energy alternatives like wind, solar and efficiency reach rural Illinois communities.

This March, Prairie Rivers Network and Illinois Sierra Club's Dr. Cindy Skrukrud trained CACEI's team of volunteers to test the waters of Copperas Creek upstream and downstream of the proposed mine and Canton Lake itself. Volunteers completed a successful initial monitoring trip and reported abundant wildlife in Copperas Creek, including mink, mollusks, crayfish and schools of juvenile fish.

Finally, Prairie Rivers Network is helping CACEI members keep a watchful eye on the upcoming water pollution permit hearing for the Industry Mine in neighboring McDonough County. On April 12, Illinois EPA held a hearing on that mine's water pollution permit renewal – this is the same mine that has over 300 Clean Water Act violations stretching back to 2004. CACEI members are especially concerned because the proposed North Canton Mine was designed by the same engineer who designed the Industry Mine.

### Citizens Against Longwall Mining, Montgomery County

[www.citizensagainstlongwallmining.org](http://www.citizensagainstlongwallmining.org)

In central Illinois, Citizens Against Longwall Mining (CALM) was hard at work, along with Prairie Rivers Net-

work and other Heartland Coalfield Alliance members, making preparations for their Central Illinois Coalfields Tour on March 26th. CALM members and concerned local residents were on hand to explain the history and impacts of existing coal mining in Macoupin and Montgomery Counties. Tour participants viewed Deer Run Mine's massive coal processing plant and its coal storage piles from the new Hillsboro Area Hospital, located just 600 feet away. CALM members showed participants the area near Hillsboro slated to be undermined by the Deer Run longwall machine, including numerous places where houses have been torn down in anticipation of mine-induced subsidence. Attendees also saw miles of headwater streams and thousands of acres of farmland that CALM members believe will be irreparably damaged by mining operations.

CALM is also making preparations to turn out citizens for Illinois EPA's upcoming public hearing on April 27th for the Shay I Mine's water pollution permit, a mine with a documented history of surface and groundwater pollution from decades of slurry disposal. Shay I has recently been purchased by a subsidiary of the Cline Group, an Appalachian mining company that is shifting its activities to Illinois. The mine operators are ramping up production, raising concerns about additional coal waste disposal.

Prairie Rivers Network is helping CALM members prepare their messages for Illinois EPA at the hearing: existing coal pollution at the mine must be cleaned up and advanced treatment put in place to ensure that continued operations protect clean water. //

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## INNOVATIVE PATHS TO CLEANER WATER CONTINUED *from page 1*

In another case, Prairie Rivers Network, the Village of Mokena and the Sierra Club developed a joint solution to the Village's need to expand its sewage treatment plant due to population growth. The Village will use an innovative method to remove nitrogen and phosphorus pollution from its sewage, relying on microscopic bugs that essentially eat the pollution, rather than using chemicals that can be environmentally harmful. The Village has accepted a strict water pollution permit and has agreed to regularly monitor the health of the East Branch of Marley Creek where the treated wastewater is dumped. The Village has also agreed

to reuse some of its wastewater for irrigation and will work on educating community members on proper disposal of unwanted medications and responsible fertilizer use.

These are just two examples of progressive approaches to prevent degradation. There are many others. Prairie Rivers Network believes the antidegradation law is an essential tool for safeguarding clean water, and will continue to use it to guide others along the path of innovation to clean, healthy Illinois waters. //





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## UPCOMING EVENTS//



### EARTH DAY - APRIL 22nd

PUBLIC HEARING FOR SHAY I MINE  
WATER POLLUTION (NPDES) PERMIT  
Wednesday, April 27 at 6:00 p.m.  
Carlinville, Illinois

WIND ENERGY FORUM: IN  
CELEBRATION OF EARTH WEEK  
Monday, April 25, 6:30 p.m.  
Champaign Public Library, Robeson A

SIERRA CLUB TWIN GROVES  
WIND FARM TOUR, EAST OF  
BLOOMINGTON  
Friday, May 13 at 6:00 p.m.  
LeRoy, IL

PRAIRIE RIVERS NETWORK  
FAMILY NATURALIST WALK  
Saturday, June 4  
Merwin Preserve, Bloomington

A RIVER GATHERING  
June 16-19  
Oregon, IL

PRAIRIE RIVERS NETWORK  
ANNUAL DINNER  
Friday, October 14  
Champaign, IL

FOR MORE DETAILS ON THESE  
AND OTHER EVENTS VISIT US AT:  
**PRAIRIERIVERS.ORG/EVENTS**

### SOUTHERN ILLINOIS COALFIELD TOUR

Saturday, April 30 and Sunday May 1  
Interested in learning first-hand about the true cost of coal in Illinois? Join citizen activists, award-winning author Jeff Biggers, and water quality professionals for a two-day tour of southern Illinois' coalfields.

Participants will explore the impacts that the entire coal life cycle has on the lands, waters, health, and quality of life of southern Illinois communities.

For more information and to register go to  
**coaltoursouthern.eventbrite.com**

### PHOTO ATTRIBUTES//

Shaeffer International, L.L.C., 1  
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JASON LINDSEY, masthead, Annual Report  
[www.JasonLindsey.com](http://www.JasonLindsey.com)



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Prairie Rivers Network is the Illinois Affiliate of the National Wildlife Federation.

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