



I am pleased to present Prairie Rivers Network's 2011 Annual Report. The report is a snapshot of an organization making real progress in protecting clean water, an organization with a growing membership, and one that is maintaining financial health in a difficult economy. I am confident that 2012 will bring more of the same. Our most important asset, the network of people passionate about protecting healthy river systems that are essential for a good quality of life, is stronger than ever. Through that network--of members, private foundations, board members, and our talented staff--we have the power to restore clean water and healthy rivers, supporting vibrant communities throughout Illinois.

– Glynnis Collins, Executive Director

## MEMBERSHIP AND DONOR GROWTH

A track record of effectiveness and an increased effort on outreach have supported continuing growth in our membership. Membership in 2011 was the highest ever, 720 members, up from 650 last year and 610 in 2008. Our members give us clout with lawmakers, are the core network of activists advocating for healthy rivers, and provide us with essential financial support to carry out our work. Our track record also pays off with institutional donors: 2011 saw an expansion in the number of private foundations supporting our work through grants.

## SOUND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

In 2011, Prairie Rivers Network saw growth in revenue and expenditures while maintaining an adequate cash reserve. The 6% budget growth over 2010 allowed us to increase staff time directed to our clean water programs. Revenue sources were private foundation grants (77% of revenue, some of which is earmarked for 2012 expenses), member donations (18% of revenue), and sales and interest (5% of revenue). Eighty cents out of every dollar raised directly supported programs to reduce pollution, restore natural areas along our rivers, and enhance public support for river protection.

### Statement of Activities for the Year Ended December 31, 2011

Revenue		Expenses	
Donations	\$145,159	Salaries	\$275,325
Grants	\$616,628	Taxes & Benefits	\$37,384
Investment Income	\$821	Direct Program Costs	\$126,267
In-Kind Donations & Reimbursements	\$28,333	Fundraising (with salaries & taxes/benefits)	\$62,735
Sales & Miscellaneous Revenue	\$12,173	Management/General (with salaries & taxes/benefits)	\$32,325
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$803,114</b>	<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$534,036</b>

**Net Assets, beginning of year \$219,859; Net Assets, end of year \$488,937 \***

*\* Our net assets at the beginning of the year include grant funds received in previous years earmarked for work in 2011. Similarly, net assets at the end of the year include grant funds earmarked for 2012 work. Our 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).*

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. Thanks to you, over the past decade, Prairie Rivers Network has experienced a compounded annual growth rate of 13%.

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.

# 2011 ACCOMPLISHMENTS



## Asian Carp and Other Aquatic Invaders

We have changed the content and tenor of the conversation about protecting the Great Lakes from Asian carp through our work with a broad coalition of state and regional partners. Severing the manmade connection between the Mississippi River and Great Lakes in order

to stop the advance of the carp once seemed a pie-in-the-sky idea; it is now receiving real consideration by City and State leaders. We have also re-framed the issue as a 2-way problem, with repercussions for downstate Illinois and the entire Mississippi River basin. Support from these stakeholders will be essential to implement a lasting and effective solution.

## Riverside Habitat Restoration

By coordinating efforts of conservation agencies and organizations along the Mississippi River we have begun to bridge the bureaucratic boundaries between the Corps of Engineers' efforts in the River's main channel and work by other agencies and land trusts in the floodplain and uplands. Breaking out of institutional silos will improve on-the-ground outcomes for riverside conservation. Our work with conservation partners along the Vermilion River in East-Central Illinois led to a new conservation plan that will be implemented in a coordinated fashion, improving protection for Illinois' only designated National Scenic River.

## Curbing Factory Farm Pollution

We have helped engage and empower residents across Illinois who are concerned about factory farm pollution. Vocal opponents of factory farms have consistently shown up to permit hearings, generated on-point letters to the editor, and made

calls and visits to lawmakers. A key victory was Illinois EPA's denial of a permit for the proposed "Traditions" mega-dairy that would have allowed the factory farm to turn a stream into a manure pit.

## Protecting Clean Water in the Coalfields

We continue to gain momentum in our push to decrease water pollution and habitat destruction from coal mining and coal-generated electricity. Victories at individual facilities such as Industry mine, Deer Run and Sugar Camp mines, and Ameren's Coffeen Power Station reduce pollution locally and also set precedents we will use to push for systemic improvements across Illinois.

The Heartland Coalfield Alliance has grown tremendously – increasing the effectiveness of all members through strategic planning and coordination of efforts. A comment from a member speaks volumes: "Thank you – I don't feel alone anymore."

## Clean Water Act Implementation and Enforcement

We are finally seeing the results of years of pressure to control nutrient pollution from sewage treatment plants –

- There is recognition among the polluters that they will be required to reduce nutrient pollution;
- Illinois EPA is starting to require nutrient control in permits for sewage treatment plants;
- The Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago is finally moving on many longstanding pollution problems including disinfecting and removing phosphorus pollution from treated sewage.

This pressure is opening up avenues for creativity in controlling both regulated and unregulated sources of nutrient pollution – we are seeing opportunities for more treatment and other creative ways of reducing nutrient pollution, such as through green infrastructure, other stormwater management, and addressing agricultural pollution.

# 2012 GOALS

In 2012 and beyond, we will continue to address the most important issues for the health of our rivers and the health of our communities.

## Reducing Pollution From Farming

Conventional farming methods pollute water and damage vital headwater streams. We will press for Farm Bill provisions that require less polluting practices and encourage farmers to enroll in conservation programs that compensate them for adopting water-friendly practices. We will continue to press for increased oversight of under-regulated factory farms and stronger state livestock regulations.

## Enforcing Clean Water Laws

Without support from voters, state regulators lack the backing they need to be tough on pollution. Our efforts will compel regulators to establish limits for nutrient pollution that fouls state waters and causes the Dead Zone in the Gulf of Mexico. We will pursue better controls on coal ash disposal, protecting communities from groundwater pollution. We will continue to

work directly with industry to demonstrate and document cost-effective methods for reducing water pollution.

## Re-envisioning How We Live with Our Rivers

We need to change the way we live with our rivers. The manmade reversal of the Chicago River and the levees and dams that choke the upper Mississippi River have outlived their purposes. The current practice of paving our landscape and plowing to the edges of rivers and wetlands causes increased flooding and pollution. Our work to prevent the spread of Asian carp and other invaders, and to improve riverside habitat conservation, promotes a new paradigm of mutual benefit that fosters a healthier living and working relationship with our rivers.



# THANK YOU MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS

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Prairie Rivers Network thanks our community partners and encourages you to support and thank those businesses and organizations that protect our rivers.

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