



Protecting Illinois' Rivers for People, Fish, and Wildlife

DUAL LEGAL ACTIONS TO REDUCE POLLUTION THAT FOULS ILLINOIS WATER AND FUELS GULF DEAD ZONE

BY GLYNNIS COLLINS & KIM KNOWLES
 This March, Prairie Rivers Network joined our Mississippi River Collaborative partners in launching two lawsuits against US EPA for their failure to regulate nutrient pollution.

Too many nutrients - a problem

Most people know that nitrogen and phosphorus are important nutrients for plants and animals. At high levels in water, however, the beneficial effects of these nutrients become problematic, and the nutrients are considered pollution.

Nitrate, a form of nitrogen, is toxic to people and other animals at high lev-

We are reducing nutrient pollution in Illinois despite agency inaction

Although state and federal regulators have been derelict in their duties, we are working with partners like the Illinois Chapter of the Sierra Club to reduce nutrient pollution by working directly with communities.

For instance, LaSalle, Plano, Itasca, Mokena, and Sycamore have each agreed to install new technologies that use bacteria to remove both nitrogen and phosphorus from sewage before it is discharged to Illinois streams. The Village of Mahomet agreed to remove phosphorus and nitrogen as well, helping to protect the Sangamon River, a drinking water source for many Illinois families.

els. A decade ago, Georgetown, Illinois had to abandon its drinking water reservoir because of high nitrate levels. Water suppliers for Decatur, Danville, and Streator had to install expensive ion exchange systems costing millions of dollars to remove nitrate from polluted reservoir water. Ongoing operation and maintenance expenses cost ratepayers tens to hundreds of thousands of dollars per year.

In rivers and lakes, nitrogen and phosphorus pollution stimulates excessive growth of algae, creating ugly mats or pea-soup scummy water. When the algae die, they rot. The bacteria that decompose them use up most or even all of the oxygen in the water, choking aquatic life. An enormous example of this problem is the "Dead Zone" that forms in the Gulf of Mexico every summer.

Especially in lakes and reservoirs, nutrient pollution can stimulate the growth of blue-green algae. This "pond scum" is unsightly and smells like vomit when it rots - enough to keep people from enjoying boating and swimming. The algae also sometimes release toxic chemicals into the water. Each summer, local communi-

IN THIS ISSUE //

| | |
|--|---|
| Greetings from Glynnis | 2 |
| Standing Up for Science Education.. | 3 |
| Take Action, Volunteer, Visit Our Rivers.. | 4 |
| 2011 Annual Report Insert | |
| Member Profile | 5 |
| Board of Directors Update | 6 |
| Protect the Shawnee..... | 6 |
| Carp and the Chicago River..... | 7 |

ties throughout Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Illinois are forced to officially close beaches because of the potential presence of blue-green algae toxins. The toxins can sicken or even kill people, pets, and livestock.

The sources - Illinois is top contributor of Dead Zone pollution

Most nutrient pollution in Illinois waters and the Mississippi River comes from farmland (especially corn and soybean fields) and from sewage treatment plants. Illinois is the largest source of both the nitrogen and phosphorus pollution that causes the Dead Zone. Illinois earns its special status partly because of the vast extent of industrialized corn and soybean production across our landscape.

We are also home to Chicago's Metropolitan Water Reclamation District; its seven sewage treatment plants, including the largest sewage treatment

continued on page 3

GREETINGS FROM GLYNNIS

This year we mark the 45th anniversary of this organization's founding. Forty-five years ago, in 1967, Patricia and Bruce Hannon learned of the plan to build a second dam on the Sangamon River near Decatur (Lake Decatur had already been constructed in 1922). The proposed dam and reservoir would displace families and flood most of Allerton Park. The Committee on Allerton Park, Prairie Rivers Network's predecessor, was born out of the Hannon's conviction that the project must be stopped. We invite you to read an essay by member and 2010 River Steward awardee Scott Hays about the origins of the proposed Oakley dam at prairierivers.org/articles/2012/03/oakley-dam/. We will feature other historical snapshots in future newsletters and on our website throughout the year.



Forty-five years after we stopped the dam, we are strong and growing stronger. Included in this issue of *Prairie River Notes* is our 2011 Annual Report. I'm proud to share with you this summary of an organization in good financial health, that is making responsible use of our donors' dollars to improve the condition of Illinois' rivers. We've moved the discussion about stopping Asian carp and other invaders out of the realm of fantasy



and into serious consideration. We've helped residents say no to poorly-conceived factory farms and mines that threaten their drinking water and quality of life. We've worked with progressive businesses and municipalities on new ways to reduce pollution from sewage and other industries.

As we continue to work toward our goal of clean water and healthy rivers, there are several opportunities for you to help and take action listed in this newsletter. And we hope to be calling on your support in the near future for a bill that will revitalize the Illinois Department of Natural Resources' conservation programs. We are hearing rumors from Springfield that lawmakers are working on a bill to generate revenue for the financially-struggling Department. Among other duties, the Department runs our State Parks and leads the state's Asian carp monitoring and response program. Reasonable fees for the many services the Department currently provides for free are certainly long overdue. A severance tax on natural wealth (such as coal, oil, and forest products) that permanently leaves the state could compensate Illinoisans for the lost wealth; revenue could support programs to mitigate impacts from those activities.

Many thanks to our long-time members and the growing number of financial supporters who are making our work possible - we truly could not do it without you.

prairieriversnetwork

Illinois' advocate for clean water and healthy rivers

Prairie Rivers Network promotes the restoration of polluted rivers and the preservation of pristine rivers - with the goal of safeguarding resources for future generations.

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STANDING UP FOR SCIENCE EDUCATION

BY BRIAN PERBIX

Prairie Rivers Network was dismayed to learn last year that the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) is using taxpayer money to market a one-sided view of coal to students as the safe and clean fuel of the future.

“From the Coal Mines to the Power Lines” (tinyurl.com/7y6hk9m) is a K-12 curriculum that offers teachers detailed lesson plans to incorporate coal into every subject area. Teachers are invited to learn how to use this program at the annual Coal Education Conference (tinyurl.com/7ggkloa) - a state sponsored, all expenses paid

professional development retreat for teachers at Rend Lake Resort where agency staff and coal industry representatives sing the praises of coal.

It may not surprise you that state sponsored coal education materials provide no information about how coal mining, burning, or waste disposal threaten our clean water. Sadly, the materials also coach teachers to question whether human use of fossil fuels is contributing to global climate change.

Illinois is one of three states that uses taxpayer money to produce and distribute coal marketing materials under the guise of legitimate education.

With our partners in the Heartland Coalfield Alliance, Prairie Rivers Network has asked the Governor’s office to immediately halt the distribution of the state sponsored coal curriculum and to cancel the annual Coal Education Retreat. So far we have received no indication that either the DCEO or Governor Quinn will put our children’s science education ahead of coal industry interests.//

Help Keep Propaganda Out of Our Kids’ Schools

Please sign our petition calling on Governor Quinn to stop selling coal to our kids: tinyurl.com/7bakdc9

LEGAL ACTION continued from page 1

plant in the world, send an average of 1.4 billion gallons of treated sewage down the Mississippi River every day.

Little action from regulators

The EPA called on states in 1998 to adopt specific limits on allowable levels of nutrient pollution, and promised to enact its own limits if states had not complied by 2003. Illinois, along with every state along the Mississippi River ignored that deadline. So far, only Wisconsin and Minnesota have taken significant action on their state’s contributions to the problem.

EPA’s continued lack of leadership at a federal level is a serious problem because the Mississippi River flows through or forms the border of 10 states, no one of which can act independently to fully protect the river. Only meaningful federal action by the

EPA can unify states behind solutions that match the scope of the problem.

The lawsuits

The lawsuits challenge EPA’s refusal to address a critical pollution problem it has acknowledged for decades. Prairie Rivers Network and our Mississippi River Collaborative partners, represented by the Natural Resources Defense Council, are challenging EPA’s denial of a 2008 petition to the agency asking them to establish in-stream standards and clean up plans for nutrient pollution. Separately, we are seeking to compel EPA to finally respond to an even older petition – a 2007 request that the agency modernize its decades-old pollution standards for sewage treatment plants and include nitrogen and phosphorus in those standards.

How will the lawsuits affect pollution?

Standards for allowable levels of nutrient pollution are the necessary starting point for reducing nutrient pollution. We can’t make progress without establishing a target to aim for.

Standards will give us a direct avenue to reduce pollution from wastewater treatment plants. Phased in over time, new technologies are affordable and can significantly reduce nutrient pollution.

Unfortunately, the standards will NOT provide a direct avenue for reducing nutrient pollution from farmland, because the agricultural industry is not held accountable for its pollution under current regulatory programs. Our national agricultural policy can and should address this shortcoming. Targets for pollution reduction, in the form of standards, are an essential first step.//

TAKE ACTION - VOLUNTEER - VISIT OUR RIVERS

Spring has arrived! To celebrate Prairie Rivers Network's 45th Anniversary, we give you 45 ways to connect with, care for and learn more about Illinois' rivers and streams at: prairierivers.org/45-for-45.

BONEYARD CREEK COMMUNITY DAY AND CLEAN UP - April 14

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 for more details and to register.

RUN FOR YOUR RIVERS AT THE ILLINOIS MARATHON - April 27,28 - Walk, Run, Donate, or Volunteer



Join in the fun -- be a part of one of the biggest community events in Illinois. There is something for everyone.

Find out more: prairierivers.org/run

Prairie Rivers Network is sponsoring a water hydration station along the marathon route. Join us.

To volunteer: tinyurl.com/6qcxu8w
then enter password prn2012

CONNECT WITH ILLINOIS RIVERS

Visit the rivers of Illinois this spring.

We have river experience flyers for each region of Illinois.

We also have a great handout for getting your kids connected with water at home and outdoors.

Go to: prairierivers.org/rivers/river-recreation/





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 |
| Total Revenue | \$803,114 | Total Expenses | \$534,036 |

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.*

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. 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

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

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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Northwest Illinois Audubon Society
Sierra Club, Prairie Group
The Conservation Foundation
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The Bruce Hannon Friends of Illinois Rivers recognizes those members who have pledged an annual gift of \$1,000 or more to sustain the work of Prairie Rivers Network into the future.

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A & R Mechanical Contractors
 A & R Services, Inc.
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 Berns, Clancy and Assoc., P.C.
 Foth Infrastructure and Environment, LLC
 Illinois-American Water- Champaign District
 Kiwanis Club of Champaign County
 Robeson Family Benefit Fund
 Stark Excavating, Inc.

Others

Amazon Services LLC
 Archer Daniels Midland Company
 Caterpillar Foundation
 Earth Share of Illinois
 Goodsearch
 Schnucks E-Scrip Program
 Tyco Electronics

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 Terrace Hall • Jeff Horwitz • Reid Johnson
 Kelsey Larson • Tyler McPheters •
 Katie Minnaugh • Danielle Sheppard • Amber Simpson
 • Ira Wachtel • Evan Williamson

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Prairie Rivers Network

1902 Fox Drive, Suite G, Champaign, IL 61820
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* Indicates in-kind donor. ** indicates in-kind and monetary donor.

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of our supporter recognition. We apologize for any errors and urge you to notify us of any corrections.

IT ALL STARTED WITH CRAWDADS AND TURTLES

BY CECILY SMITH

Many of you know Rob Kanter as the writer and narrator of *Environmental Almanac*, which runs as a commentary on WILL-AM and a column in the *Champaign News-Gazette*. What you may not know about Rob is that his fondest childhood memories include catching “crawdads” out of the creek across from his suburban Cincinnati neighborhood, and fishing with his mom, brother and sister at their local county park. By “fishing,” Rob means an outdoor activity that was half-fishing and half sitting still while his mother pulled fishhooks out of his and his siblings’ clothes.

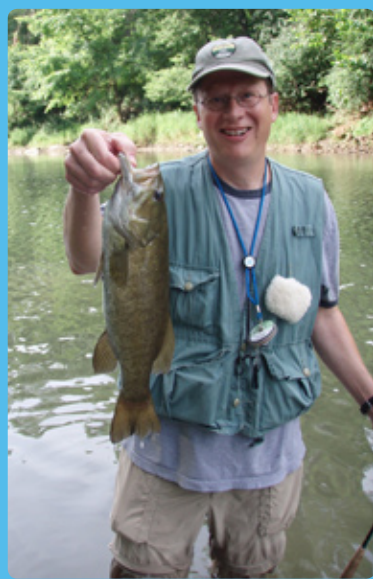
As Rob continued to sharpen his angling skills, another Ohio youngster named Karen Carney was busy exploring the Cuyohoga River and other waters in her hometown of Cleveland. Karen’s adventures in the parks sparked her interest in the outdoors; during her teen years, Karen volunteered to capture painted turtles for a research study.

Fast forward to 2001. Rob and Karen are married, with a son and daughter. One day, after seeing a presentation about Prairie Rivers Network, Karen came home and told Rob “You’ve got to call them!” As a part-time English instructor at the U of I, Rob had been looking for a way to transition into environmental work. He did call; welcomed by executive director Rob Moore and watershed organizer Marc Miller. Rob’s first assignment was editing the newsletter; he also assisted with annual dinners and river clean-ups. Board President Jon McNussen was so impressed with Rob’s continued dedication to Prairie Rivers Network that he invited Rob to join him at a National Wildlife Federation Annual Meeting for state affiliates. Rob continues to volunteer for PRN (currently he is co-captain of our Illinois Marathon - Run for Your Rivers team).

From the time Rob first walked into Prairie Rivers Network’s cluttered, but cozy McKinley Foundation office in the heart of campustown, he was bowled over by the

“smart, hardworking and effective” staff. Rob and Karen became Prairie Rivers Network members during Rob’s first year as a volunteer, because they saw us as more than an organization of ideas. They knew first hand how staff worked on-the-ground, how they “got things done with what they had.”

Rob Kanter and Friend



As Prairie River Network members, Rob and Karen also got to know the organization through its history. Prairie Rivers Network’s roots are in the hearts and minds of a committed group of residents, including Bruce and Patricia Hannon, who in the 1970s succeeded in stopping a dam that would have flooded thousands of acres of Allerton Park. It’s a great story.

Rob also experienced first-hand Bruce’s ability to make things happen. A few years ago, Rob was chatting with Bruce about an idea Bruce and Walt Robinson had for a writing project; something that would

focus on the environment and be published on a regular basis. Was Rob interested in doing this? You bet! Six weeks later, Bruce called to say the funding was in place, and the *Environmental Almanac* was born.

Last fall while attending our Annual Dinner, Rob and Karen heard a challenge posed - if five new people joined our Bruce Hannon Friends of Illinois Rivers group, signaling their ongoing commitment to donate at the \$1,000 or more level annually, an anonymous donor would donate an additional \$5,000 to Prairie Rivers Network. Rob and Karen joined other donors that night in helping us meet that challenge. Rob says, “It seemed like a perfect opportunity to show how much we value the efforts of Prairie Rivers Network as an organization, and Bruce as an individual.”

Rob and Karen know that caring for our precious streams, wetlands and riverside forests springs from literally getting your feet wet, whether you’re trying to catch scurrying crawdads or watching painted turtles basking on a stream boulder. //

HELP PROTECT THE SHAWNEE NATIONAL FOREST FROM A STRIP MINE

U.S. FOREST SERVICE NEEDS TO HEAR FROM YOU

BY BRIAN PERBIX

Local residents and river enthusiasts from across the country recently spoke up for the Shawnee National Forest by submitting thousands of comments urging the Forest Service not to let Peabody Coal turn part of the Shawnee National Forest in southern Illinois into a strip mine. According to the Shawnee Forest Plan, the guiding land use planning document for the Shawnee National Forest: "Lands adjacent to streams and rivers are rich in biological diversity and especially important for recreation and wildlife."

Perhaps that's why everyone was so surprised last December when the U.S. Forest Service announced it was considering a proposed land swap (tinyurl.com/6sw6kxm) with a subsidiary of Peabody along the Saline River in Gallatin County, IL that would turn Shawnee National Forest land into a strip mine.

The 384 acres of Forest Service land Peabody wants to strip mine includes over 50 acres of wetlands, and has high quality mature forests that are home to federally endangered Indiana and Gray Bats. Furthermore, the Illinois Natural History Survey has for the first time discovered that the Saline River system is home to the endangered Fat Pocketbook mussel. Strip mining this unique natural area would destroy this crucial habitat and reduce water quality

in the Saline River, posing a threat not just to wildlife, but also to the local residents who rely on clean and healthy rivers for hunting, fishing and recreation.

Now that the initial comment period is over, the Forest Service will begin the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement.

How can you help?

Go to our website and click on **Take Action** button to sign our petition.



There is still time to tell the Forest Service to stop the swap, and make sure this gem of the Shawnee Forest remains protected forever. The future health of the Saline River system is truly at stake, and we must act to protect high quality habitat along rivers to ensure clean water and healthy communities for generations to come.//

'NO' TO THE SWAP: PROTECT SALINE RIVER FROM STRIP MINE

Prairie Rivers

Street

City State / Province

Post Code Country

Dear Supervisor Nichols:

Please protect the Saline River and its floodplain from strip mining pollution by withdrawing from the Land-for-Land Exchange between American Land Holdings of Illinois, LLC and the Shawnee National Forest.

As stated in the Forest Service's land use plan for the forest, "Lands adjacent to streams and rivers are rich in biological diversity and especially"

Keep me informed!

Submit

Sign the petition at:
prairierivers.org/Take-Action

BOARD OF DIRECTORS UPDATE

Welcome Ellyn

We are delighted to welcome new board member Ellyn Bullock. Ellyn runs a law practice, the Law Office of Ellyn Bullock, in Champaign. She specializes in adoption, guardianship, and civil litigation.



Ellyn was named Prairie Rivers Network Volunteer of the Year in 2001 and served on our board from 2002-2003. She recently received the YWCA

Advocacy Award for environmental activism and teaches an earth care Sunday school class at her church. She and her husband David are longtime members of Prairie Rivers Network and environmental advocates. They have three children, Kyle, Imy and Charlie.

Thank You Chad and Dan

It is with gratitude that we say good-bye to Dan Deeb of Chicago and Chad McKenzie of Leroy as board members. We thank both of them for their service to Prairie Rivers Network.//

STUDY SHINES LIGHT ON HOW TO STOP CARP, IMPROVE THE CHICAGO RIVER

BY ROBERT HIRSCHFELD

A highly-anticipated report clearly demonstrates that it is possible to separate the artificial connection between the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River basins and prevent the transfer of invasive species through the Chicago River system.

Authored by the Great Lakes Commission and Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Cities Initiative, “Restoring the Natural Divide” (www.glc.org/caaws/) re-envision the Chicago River as a system which not only prevents the transfer of aquatic invaders such as Asian carp, but also better serves its functions of moving people and goods and managing stormwater, while improving water quality.

“Restoring the Natural Divide” offers detailed analysis on three possible separation scenarios and includes a wealth of data on the integration of each scenario with the region’s water infrastructure, as well as an outline and timetable for implementation.



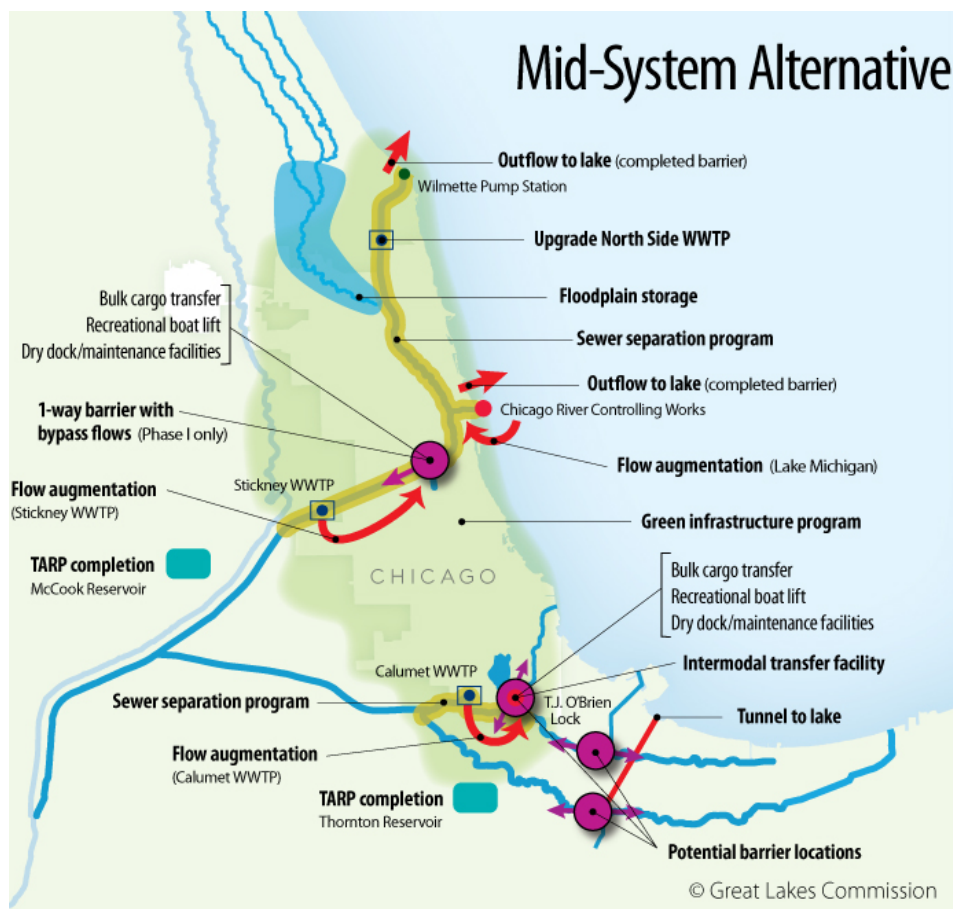
Conceptual rendering Calumet River, near Lake Calumet © HDR, Inc.

The study was prompted by the urgent need to find a solution to the ongoing problem of invasive species, including Asian carp. Strong evidence suggests that the threat of Asian carp entering the Great Lakes is imminent and that their potential to wreak ecological and economic havoc is real.

Local and Federal Governments currently spend upwards of \$200 million per year to control invasive species in the Great Lakes. Ending the continuing threat of transfer of these aquatic invaders through the Chicago River system will be essential to the region’s long-term economic well-being, and would complement a regional vision for river restoration, increasing the value of Chicago’s second waterfront.

“Restoring the Natural Divide” makes the case for separation at a time when Illinois leaders are reinvesting in Chicago’s River, affirming its place as a vital asset to the people of Illinois. Watch more at tinyurl.com/7kwj5e9

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Please share this newsletter with a friend when you are finished.

UPCOMING EVENTS//



BONEYARD CLEAN-UP

April 14th
boneyardcreek.org

EARTH DAY

April 22
 Earth Day is a great opportunity to make a difference, educate yourself, and renew your commitment to being a good steward!

prairierivers.org/articles/2012/03/earth-day-events/

RUN FOR YOUR RIVERS ILLINOIS MARATHON

April 27 & 28
 Run, walk, or volunteer with us.
prairierivers.org/run

CHICAGO RIVER DAY

May 12th
www.chicagoriver.org/events/chicago_river_day/

55TH ANNUAL DES PLAINES RIVER CANOE AND KAYAK RACE

May 20th
www.canoemarathon.com/

IT'S OUR RIVER DAY

Sept 15, 2012

PRAIRIE RIVERS NETWORK'S 14TH ANNUAL DINNER

Oct 5, 2012

CLEAN WATER ACT 40TH ANNIVERSARY

Oct 18, 2012

45 WAYS TO CELEBRATE PRAIRIE RIVERS NETWORKS' 45TH ANNIVERSARY

prairierivers.org/45-for-45

PLEASE TAKE OUR QUICK 6-QUESTION SURVEY

Let us know what you are interested in and how we are doing.

We greatly value your input!
www.surveymonkey.com/s/J8GDY5Z

PHOTO ATTRIBUTES//

Prairie Rivers Network, masthead

JASON LINDSEY, masthead, Annual Report
www.JasonLindsey.com



You can earn money for Prairie Rivers Network while shopping - visit prairierivers.org for more info.

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

If you participate in a workplace giving campaign, look for ESI and designate Prairie Rivers Network to receive your contributions.