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E-News for October 30, 2013

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TAKE ACTION to support CLEAN ENERGY in Illinois!

In 2007, the state passed visionary legislation establishing the Illinois Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS), a path to ensure 25 percent of our energy would come from clean sources by 2025. This was one of the strongest RPS programs in the nation, and it has already had positive results:

- \$4.16 billion total economic boost over the life of the projects
- Created over 13,000 full-time jobs during construction periods and nearly 600 permanent jobs in rural Illinois

However, the program has unexpectedly stalled until 2018 due to implementation challenges.

Currently, bills in both the Illinois Senate and House contain a proposal to fix the RPS.

Tell your legislators to support SB 103 and HB 2864 so this program - which is great for both the environment and economy - can continue.

[TAKE ACTION HERE!](#)

Annual Dinner Roundup

Everyone had a great time at the Prairie Rivers Network Annual Dinner! [See photos and read about the evening's events.](#) We were also featured in the "[On the Town](#)" section of the News Gazette.

We were so pleased to honor Suzanne Smith and Kevin Cummings this year! Sue received the River Steward award for her work to protect the Salt Fork and Middle Fork Rivers. Kevin received the Outstanding Public Servant award for a distinguished career spent researching and fostering critically important freshwater mussels, often called "the livers of the rivers."



Keynote speaker Robert McChesney encouraged attendees to take an active role in democracy and grassroots organizations because history has shown that these organizations and passionate

individuals working together can have positive impacts. You can read about McChesney's talk in our Winter newsletter.

If you could not attend, [you can still support Prairie Rivers Network and clean water by making a donation.](#)

Fantastic Wood Sculptures to benefit Prairie Rivers Network

Rick Larimore, wood sculpter and Prairie Rivers Network member, will have a [sculpture show and sale](#) and will donate 10% of the proceeds to Prairie Rivers Network!

Where: Urbana Civic Center, 108 Water St., Urbana, IL

When: December 8-10 from 4-8 pm

Opening night reception from 3-8 pm on December 8 with music by *Celia and the Johnny Bolts* and catering by Piato.

Visit Rick's [website](#) to view his amazing sculptures.

Victory for Illinois' Children

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (IDCEO) has [finally taken down their misleading and deceptive kids' "educational" website on coal](#). This website promoted coal as safe and good for the environment. Thank you to everyone who took a stand and asked Governor Quinn to stop misleading our kids!

Alligator! . . . no, I can't believe it's a fish!



The Alligator Gar is a fish with a lineage that dates back to the age of the dinosaurs! Despite their fearsome appearance, alligator gar don't bother people. But they are large and in charge in our rivers, living for decades with a top possible weight of 200-300 pounds!

Read more about how [biologists are helping this ancient fish make a comeback](#) in Illinois.

Court action on coal ash and nutrient pollution

Two recent court rulings are helping to promote clean water:

A federal judge in Pennsylvania agreed with Prairie Rivers Network and other environmental and

public health partners that the Environmental Protection Agency needs to set federal regulations for the safe and proper disposal of toxic coal ash. Read the [press release](#) on our website.

And . . .the U.S. District Court in Eastern Louisiana ordered the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to decide within 180 days whether it will require new limits on the nutrient pollution that is causing the growth of dangerous algae in the waters of Illinois and the Mississippi River basin, and contributing to the Gulf of Mexico Dead Zone. [Read more here.](#)



Bioneers Chicago - Nov. 1 - 3, 2013

Bioneers are social and scientific innovators who are mimicking nature's operating instructions to help humans to live on Earth in ways that honor the web of life, each other, and future generations.

Traci Barkley from Prairie Rivers Network will run a workshop on "getting off the coal train." There are [many exciting speakers and workshops](#) about fixing our problems in an earth-minded way.

Fewer natural areas, more cropland

We are losing habitat for wildlife, recreation, stormwater management, and open space in Illinois. The U.S. Department of Agriculture recently released new data that show a net national loss of non-cropland (e.g., prairie, forest) due to conversion to cropland.

Read more [on our website.](#)

Mahomet Aquifer Protection Meeting

The newly-formed Mahomet Aquifer Protection Alliance is looking for active members!

Many people are concerned about the Clinton Landfill's plans to store sediment with high concentrations of PCBs. This landfill sits above the Mahomet Aquifer, a critical drinking water supply for central Illinois. A new group has formed to advocate for the health of the aquifer.

If you are concerned, please attend their next meeting.

When: Saturday November 2, 2013, from 9:45 am- 2:30 pm

Where: Vespasian Warner Library, Revere Room, 310 N. Quincy, Clinton, IL.

For more information, visit www.mahometaquifer.org.

Carpooling to the meeting is available, please email mahometaquifer@gmail.com.

Heartland Coalfield Alliance meeting and coal mine tour

When: Thursday, November 14 (coal mine tour) and Friday, November 15 from 9am-3:30 pm (meeting)

Where: Fulton County Health Department, 700 E. Oak St., Canton, IL 61520

The [meeting will focus on the past, present and future of strip mining in West Central Illinois](#) and be preceded by a tour of proposed, active and reclaimed mine sites in the area. All are invited.

Contact Carrie at cotto@prairierivers.org for more information.

WRRDA passes in the House, removes protections

Last week, the House of Representatives passed a Water Resources Reform & Development Act that strips important water and habitat protections by streamlining the environmental review process for large projects like harbor expansions. Both House and Senate versions of the bill will continue to be negotiated in conference committee. Members of the committee will need to hear from citizens about maintaining environmental protections.

Stay tuned for opportunities to make your voice heard!

Art @ the Y in collaboration with Prairie Rivers Network

The University YMCA on the campus of the University of Illinois will feature [paintings by Kim Curtis in the next Art @ the Y show](#). The show features nearly 20 works from the artist's series, *Thirtyseven*, which documents the fascinating wetland area along the San Francisco Bay area's Highway 37. Proceeds from any paintings sold will benefit Prairie Rivers Network.

Come to the opening reception on Thursday, November 14 from 7-9 pm and hear Glynnis Collins, Director of Prairie Rivers Network, and artist Kim Curtis in conversation at 7:30 pm. The show will run until January 19, 2014.

PRN in the News

- [Illinois groups are working together to reduce harmful algal blooms](#) (October 10, 2013)
- [Prairie Rivers Network honors two at Annual Dinner](#) (October 8, 2013)
- [EPA ordered to make stricter coal ash rules](#) (October 7, 2013)
- [Environmental Almanac: Good turnout to check out rain gardens](#) (October 6, 2013)
- [Illinois River algal bloom largest in at least quarter century - Consequences: Dire](#) (September 30, 2013)
- [EPA forced to decide on nutrient pollution rules](#) (September 27, 2013)

Upcoming Events:

- [Bioneers Chicago](#) (Chicago, IL) November 1-3
- [Mahomet Aquifer Protection Meeting](#) (Clinton, IL) November 2
- [Great Mississippi River Clean-up](#) (Alton, IL) November 2
- [Kayaking Tours of Lake Argyle](#) (Lake Argyle State Park, Colchester, IL) November 2
- [Seminar Series: Fresh Water Availability](#) (Urbana, IL) November 3, 10, 17
- [Skokie Lagoons Stewardship Program](#) (Winnetka, IL) November 9 (and every 2nd Saturday of the month)
- [Heartland Coalfield Alliance Meeting and Coal Mine Tour](#) (Canton, IL) Nov. 14-15
- [Art @ the Y Exhibition Opening and Reception](#) (Urbana, IL) November 14
- [Rick Larimore Wood Sculpture show and sale](#) (Urbana, IL) December 8-10

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