

IT TAKES A NETWORK TO PROTECT A RIVER

Prairie Rivers Network is Illinois' advocate for clean water and healthy rivers.

PrairieRivers.org



REDUCING WATER POLLUTION

We won an important legal victory from the Illinois Appellate Court that clarifies the need for the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency to write more protective permits. The decision should result in stronger controls over water pollution, particularly from the chemicals phosphorus and nitrogen, which feed the algae that clog our lakes and feed the Gulf of Mexico Dead Zone. We are working with watershed groups, municipalities, and IEPA on developing long term plans to rid our waterways of harmful algae.

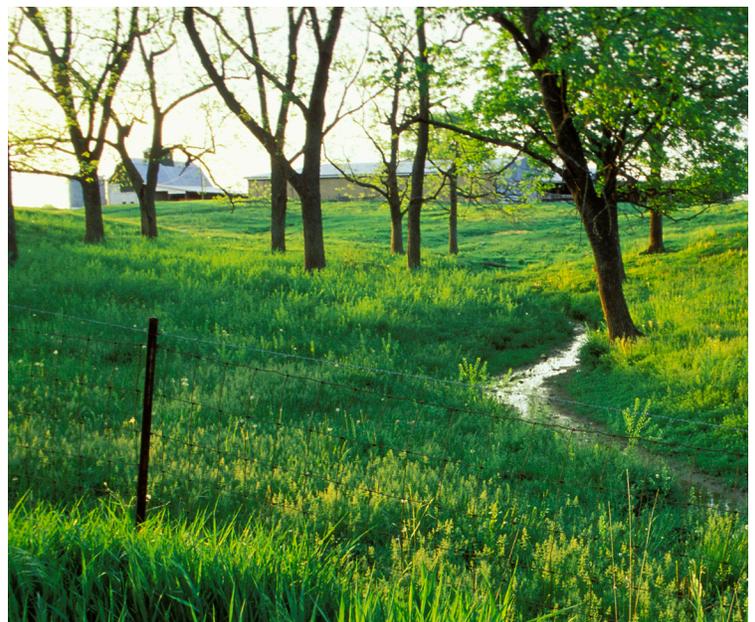
SAVING WETLANDS AND FLOODPLAINS

Prairie Rivers Network and our partners have succeeded in holding a highly destructive Army Corps of Engineers project at bay. The project would destroy >50,000 acres of fish and bird habitat on the Mississippi River and put the homes and livelihoods of southern IL river towns at great risk of destructive flooding. With the invaluable help of locals, the coalition fighting the New Madrid levee project has garnered the support of leaders like Senators Mark Kirk and Dick Durbin, Mayor Tyrone Coleman of Cairo, the Illinois, Missouri and Kentucky NAACP, and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, who all want this project stopped for good. We continue to work together to ensure the levee is not built.

Prairie Rivers Network and our partner Quad Cities Waterkeeper won an important legal victory this month when a federal court ruled that the Ballegeer Excavation Company of Geneseo, IL violated the Clean Water Act when it dumped thousands of tons of concrete and construction debris on the banks of the Green River, a tributary of the Mississippi.

ACCELERATING ILLINOIS' NUTRIENT LOSS REDUCTION STRATEGY

With a coalition of partners, we are working to increase the adoption of farm practices such as cover crops, diverse crop rotations, and edge-of-field buffers and wetlands that improve soil health and water quality. Working with the Soil and Water Conservation Districts, we produced an educational newsletter identifying the multiple benefits of such practices, reaching over 2,500 farms. We are also working with the Soil and Water Conservation Districts to increase their capacity to provide critical technical assistance to farmers as they adopt new land and water stewardship practices.



CLEAN WATER

WATER & FARMING

PROTECTING THE MONARCH BUTTERFLY



The monarch butterfly is imperiled and is currently being considered for protection under the Endangered Species Act. In an effort to protect its habitat, we are partnering with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources to develop a plan to accelerate monarch habitat expansion across the state, including advocating for National Wildlife Federation's IL Mayors Monarch Pledge, whereby mayors agree to take actions to make their communities butterfly and pollinator friendly. We

co-hosted the first IL Monarch Summit and organized the Champaign County Pollinator Coalition, an organizational model for protecting and expanding habitat. Finally, we are working with Girl Scouts and school groups to engage youth to protect natural places and wildlife.

PROTECTING WILDLIFE HABITAT

Our continued leadership has helped strengthen the Middle Illinois River Conservation Collaborative—a group of dedicated conservation practitioners working to protect and restore vital floodplain habitats of the Illinois River. Working with a coalition of groups, we successfully convinced Congress to provide \$450 million over the next 3 years for the Land & Water Conservation Fund, a program that supports ecological restoration and the development of parks and recreational facilities. In the future, we'll be working on obtaining permanent reauthorization of this highly-successful program.

IMPROVING RIVER MANAGEMENT

We work in partnership with agencies and organizations to improve the health of the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers by supporting ecological restoration and opposing wasteful and destructive navigation projects. In 2016, we advocated for and obtained nearly \$20 million for restoration and monitoring on the Mississippi River. We also successfully supported federal legislation that makes it easier for private and nonprofit entities to partner with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on restoration projects, an important development that will allow for more restoration.

REDUCING THE THREAT OF INVASIVE SPECIES

As part of an advisory group to Congress on Asian carp and other invasive species, we are advocating solutions that will help revitalize the Chicago River. In 2016, we delivered recommendations to Congress and President Obama for robust and aggressive programs that will prevent the movement of aquatic invasive species between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River. We are now working to ensure these programs are fully funded and implemented.

RIVERS & WILDLIFE

STRENGTHENING THE FEDERAL COAL ASH RULE

In coalition with partners, we worked to strengthen the federal coal ash rule, which regulates the handling and storage of toxic coal ash. Although the new rule contains major deficiencies, it expands the number of coal ash impoundments subject to regulation, improves groundwater monitoring, and requires protective liners for all new impoundments, and cleanup and closure of certain impoundments that pollute groundwater.

FIGHTING FOR STRONG ILLINOIS-SPECIFIC COAL ASH RULES

Strong state rules are necessary to cover the remaining gaps in the federal coal ash rule. We've proposed a strong set of rules for Illinois, which include robust public participation and responsible, comprehensive cleanup as an alternative to Illinois EPA's weak proposal.

FOCUSING ON COAL ASH DOWNSTATE

Of the 26 power plants with coal ash in Illinois, many critical targets are downstate. We're expanding our public outreach in southern Illinois to help build local support for responsible closure of coal ash dumps. We're also working on assisting these communities in making future transitions from coal-dominated to more diverse economies such as renewable energy and sustainable food systems.

PROTECTING THE MIDDLE FORK—ILLINOIS' ONLY WILD AND SCENIC RIVER

We've been working to remove coal ash impoundments from the floodplain of the Middle Fork of the Vermilion River. Most recently, the National Park Service, spurred by our comments objecting to a bank reinforcement permit, joined us in calling for removal of the coal ash from the floodplain.



Middle Fork River

WATER & ENERGY