



Protecting Illinois' Rivers for People, Fish, and Wildlife

ILLINOIS DRINKING WATER AND THE DAKOTA ACCESS PIPELINE

BY ANDREW REHN

We're gambling with the drinking water of the people of Illinois.

The Dakota Access Pipeline is a partially constructed pipeline, over a thousand miles long and two and a half feet wide, that would carry crude oil from North Dakota to Illinois. In North Dakota, protests of the pipeline by members of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe, and those who stand with the tribe, have garnered national attention.

Pipelines burst every day. A Wall Street Journal investigation found 1,400 pipeline spills nationally in just 4 years between 2000 and 2013. That is essentially one a day. They're common enough that you can find a running list of major pipeline spills in the U.S. on Wikipedia. According to the WSJ investigation, four out of every five of these spills were discovered by local residents – not the pipeline operators. The burden of detection falls on the people who live on the land, who often wake up to disaster on their property.

Prairie Rivers Network has completed an analysis comparing the pipeline's

path to Illinois EPA's designated community water supply lakes and river intakes. We found that the pipeline puts the water supply of 27,382 people at risk in Illinois (see maps). The towns threatened by the pipeline include Carlinville, Carlyle, Greenville, Hamilton, Modesto, Nauvoo, Patoka, Palmyra, Sorento, Warsaw, and the communities with which these towns share their water supplies. Should the pipe burst, these water supplies could be damaged.

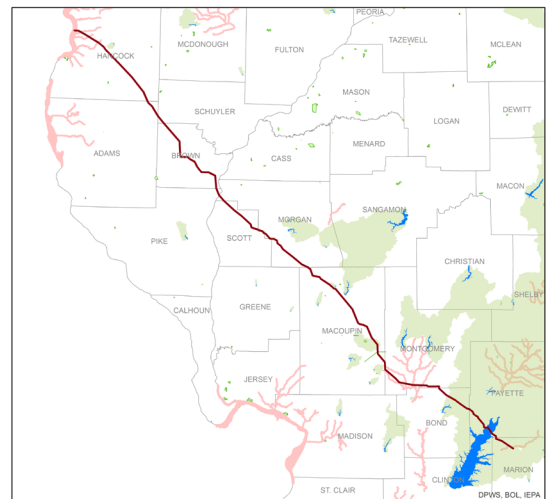
The Dakota Access Pipeline crosses at least 56 named rivers in Illinois: Apple Creek, Macoupin Creek, Mauvaise Terre Creek, Sandy Creek, Shoal Creek, Hurricane Creek, Flour Creek, Walnut Creek, Otter Creek, Brea Creek, Cedar Creek...and the list goes on. Any number of unnamed tributaries may also be crossed by the pipeline. Each of these, any of these, is threatened by this pipeline.



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The Dakota Access Pipeline also represents a national commitment to fossil fuels, making climate goals harder to achieve. It will prop up an industry that damages our waters and lands, and kills our wildlife. Energy Transfer, the company behind the pipeline, will reap the profits from this pipeline, but the people and the land will carry the risk.//



Legend

- DAPL
- CWS Lakes
- CWS Lakes Watersheds
- CWS River Intake Zone 1 Protection Area
- Nature Preserves
- Counties

This map is intended to highlight some of the threats the DAPL pipeline poses to water resources in Illinois. Please note that the location of the DAPL pipeline is approximated from maps found at: www.dapipelinefacts.com/resources/project-maps.html Community water supply resources identified through Illinois EPA's SWAP.



CAROL'S CURRENTS

Happy 50th Anniversary PRN

A new year is right around the corner and with it brings PRN's 50th Anniversary. We are looking forward to celebrating with you in 2017! Thank you to all of our members—from those who have been with us from the very beginning to those who are just now joining our network and everyone in between. You are what makes Prairie Rivers Network great!



Why River Stewardship Matters

Lately, I have been talking to people I meet about how important it is that they get involved in a river stewardship project: clean up a river or nearby roadway; plant trees or a riverside buffer filled with milkweed and native flowering plants for pollinators; become a citizen scientist who measures water quality or the abundance of wildlife; install a rain garden to protect against flooding and stormwater runoff; paint “drains to the river” signs on storm drains on your block; plant a cover crop on your garden or farm field. It doesn't matter if you do one or all of these. What matters is that you do SOMETHING to benefit a stream or river and while you're at it, take along a friend. Take someone who hasn't yet experienced the abundant beauty of Illinois' rivers, who doesn't yet consider themselves a river steward.

Why? Research points to the direct connection between stewardship actions like planting trees and cleaning up rivers to further civic engagement actions like writing a letter to the editor, advocating for the environment, or even running for elected office. In fact, environmental stewards view their activities as civic engagement and are much more likely to take further stewardship actions.

Protecting wetlands and rivers is more important now than ever before. An acre of wetlands stores three acres of flood waters, while acting like a sponge to soak up carbon and nutrients from stormwater and agriculture runoff, preventing toxic algae blooms in lakes and rivers we drink from and play in, and that are critical to the survival of fish and other wildlife.

Clean water knows no geographic or political distinctions. It only flows from one watershed to the next—and in Illinois 50 of our 51 watersheds flow downstate to feed our greatest river, the Mississippi. The need and desire for clean water unites us all. Clean water is vital to healthy communities and healthy local economies no matter where you live in Illinois. We must all stand together as the voice for clean water. So, find a friend who needs to become a voice for clean water and healthy rivers. Get them involved so that we can add their voice to ours. Then ask them to become a member of Prairie Rivers Network—or better yet, give them a gift membership. There's no other gift like the gift of clean water.

Carol

prairieriversnetwork

Prairie Rivers Network champions clean, healthy rivers and lakes and safe drinking water to benefit the people and wildlife of Illinois.

Drawing upon sound science and working cooperatively with others, we advocate public policies and cultural values that sustain the ecological health and biological diversity of water resources and aquatic ecosystems.

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HOW YOU CAN HELP SAVE THE MONARCHS

BY CAROL HAYS

Not long ago, spring and summer in Illinois were marked by the reappearance of clouds of orange and black wings. The Eastern Monarch butterfly was adopted as Illinois' state insect because the entire state lies in its migration path across the Midwest. Every Illinois school kid could identify the Monarch because they were so common across our rural and urban landscapes. For most of us, the Monarch is what we thought of when we thought of caterpillars and butterflies. Sadly, this is no longer true.

This summer many Illinoisans counted only a few Monarch sightings. As a migrating species, the Monarch relies on the prevalence of its host plant, milkweed, to reproduce, and on native flowering plants blooming in large expanses across the Midwest landscape to feed on during its journey from Mexico to Canada and back each year. Their once expansive prairie habitat has given way to paved development, and increased use of pesticides and herbicides have removed the milkweed and native flowering prairie plants Monarchs rely on to reproduce and feed. This is a problem for Illinois' native bee populations as well. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is now assessing the Eastern Monarch butterfly and Illinois' Rusty Patched Bumblebee for endangered species status.

Here's how YOU can help! Become a Monarch Ambassador!

- Contact local schools about establishing a school garden for Monarchs and other pollinators.
- Work with your faith community to incorporate Monarch gardens on their grounds.
- Ask businesses and business parks to incorporate Monarch habitat in their landscaping.
- Write a letter to the editor of your local paper thanking businesses that have pollinator habitat in their landscapes.
- Work with your neighbors to plant Pollinator Pocket gardens around your neighborhood.
- Sign up for the Monarch license plate

Visit [PrairieRivers.org/Monarch-Ambassador](https://prairierivers.org/Monarch-Ambassador) for more information about these ideas and more ways you can help SAVE THE MONARCHS!

YOU can also help expand our pollinator protection efforts by giving a gift membership to someone you love as a birthday or holiday gift. Give to honor a future filled with fluttering Monarchs and buzzing bees! Find out more at: [PrairieRivers.org/Gift](https://prairierivers.org/Gift). //

WHY I GIVE TO PRAIRIE RIVERS NETWORK

Chris and David Main, long-time members

In recent years a phrase has emerged that has inspired us to make Prairie Rivers Network the primary recipient of our charitable giving. "Think globally, act locally" was coined either by David Brower of Friends of the Earth or René Dubos as an advisor to the UN; but regardless of who said it, the phrase serves to underscore why we choose to give to our nearby clean water and river friends at PRN. The global problems that we all face right now are overwhelming: terrorism, climate change, pandemics, nuclear weapons and more. While we do our best to support several international groups that address these problems, we sometimes feel disconnected from their work. Progress on global issues is often barely discernible from one year to the next and it can seem like our donation is too small to make any difference. But when we give to Prairie Rivers Network we know where the money is going, we get frequent progress reports from the group, and we have no doubt that together we are making a difference for rivers and clean water in our own state and region. Prairie Rivers Network gets things done, and each year when we go to their marvelous Annual Dinner and listen to their Executive Director summarize the past year's accomplishments, we are thrilled that we have a group so dedicated, so capable and so responsive right here in our own community. Giving to PRN feels right and actually contributes to the well-being of the place where we live.//





2016 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

IT TAKES A NETWORK TO PROTECT A RIVER

YOU made all of these accomplishments possible. YOU are making a difference. Thank you for your support!



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 to develop 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 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.

ADVANCING CONSERVATION AGRICULTURE

With a coalition of partners, we are increasing 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. In conjunction with the Soil and Water Conservation Districts, we produced an educational newsletter identifying the multiple benefits of such practices, reaching over 2,500 farm owners. 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.

PROTECTING WILDLIFE HABITAT

Our continued leadership has strengthened the Middle Illinois River Conservation Collaborative—a group of dedicated conservation practitioners working to protect and restore vital floodplain habitats of the Illinois River. 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 continue to advocate for permanent reauthorization of this highly-successful program.

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 asking Illinois mayors to take the Mayors

Monarch Pledge, whereby mayors agree to take actions to make their communities butterfly and pollinator friendly. We co-hosted the first Illinois 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.

IMPROVING RIVER MANAGEMENT

In partnership with agencies and organizations, we are improving 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 increase wildlife habitat.

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.

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 robust set of rules for Illinois, which include meaningful public participation and responsible, comprehensive cleanup as an alternative to Illinois EPA's weaker proposal.

FOCUSING ON COAL ASH DOWNSTATE

Of the 26 power plants with coal ash in Illinois, many sit along downstate rivers. We're expanding our public outreach in southern Illinois to build local support for responsible closure of coal ash dumps. We're also assisting these communities in transitioning from coal-dominated to more diverse future 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.//



ANNUAL DINNER ROUND UP

BY ROBERT HIRSCHFELD

Thank you to all who attended our Annual Dinner in October; the board and staff had a great time visiting with our members. You can view fun photos from the evening at: www.flickr.com/photos/prairieriversnetwork

Award Winners

Bruce Colravy of Mahomet, IL received the River Steward award for his dedication to protecting and promoting the Sangamon River in Central Illinois through his work as co-founder and President of the Upper Sangamon River Conservancy (USRC). Each year, Bruce organizes many activities on the Sangamon, leading citizen science RiverWatch surveys, mussel surveys, clean-up efforts, float trips, and more. Bruce has led efforts to create land and water trails through Mahomet and along the Sangamon River. The USRC is one of the most active watershed groups in the state, attracting new members each year, and intentionally targeting UIUC students to be future river stewards and champions.

Steve Stierwalt of Sadorus, Illinois received the Outstanding Public Servant award for his work as Chairman of the Champaign County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD). Under Steve's leadership, the Champaign County SWCD is playing a key role in advancing practices that preserve soil and protect water quality. Steve was recently elected President of the Association of Illinois SWCDs on a platform aimed at providing more effective and broad-reaching technical assistance to meet the changing needs of farmers and help them steward land and water.

This year's **Volunteer of the Year award** was presented to a group of outstanding individuals who together have been instrumental in helping to challenge a highly destructive levee project on the Mississippi River. The awardees included Mayor Tyrone Coleman of Cairo, IL; Richard Grigsby of Mounds, IL; Sarita Sawyer of Mounds, IL; Monica Smith of Cairo, IL; Lindell Warren of Olive Branch, IL; and David Willis of Olive Branch, IL for their work in opposing a project that would destroy invaluable wetlands and put their communities at risk of catastrophic flooding. The group offered their images and stories for use in a PRN video series, made personal appeals to lawmakers,

traveled to Washington, D.C. to meet with federal agencies and senators, wrote letters to the editor and opinion pieces, and recruited others to call for an end to the project.

Water is Life

Keynote Speaker George Hawkins

The evening's keynote speaker was George Hawkins, General Manager and Chief Executive Officer of DC Water. Mr. Hawkins is one of the nation's best communicators on the future of water and how we can meet the needs of a growing population, delivering clean, safe, and reliable water to all Americans. We were very pleased to bring such a powerful storyteller to our friends at the Dinner.

George passionately described the great strides that we've made in cleaning up America's waters since the passage of the Clean Water Act. We've gone from rivers that caught fire to rivers that support a renewed abundance of fish and wildlife. But he also urged us to recognize the urgent need to develop and deploy new tools and methods if we are to keep improving our water quality. We keep attempting to replicate past successes, while not devoting enough resources to emerging threats. Too often we turn to urban areas and municipalities and ask financially struggling citizens to bear the substantial costs of marginal improvements in water quality from treatment plants. Meanwhile, unregulated pollution is pouring into our waters from agricultural runoff and rural areas. George described how we must turn our eyes to the next chapter of water quality improvements and explained how community-focused organizations like Prairie Rivers Network are right at the forefront of that battle, and in the best position to deliver future successes.//

The Clark Bullard Advocacy Fund

At the Annual Dinner, The Board of Directors surprised long-time PRN Member and fellow Board Member Clark Bullard with the creation of The Clark Bullard Advocacy Fund with \$30,000 in donations from the Board. This Endowment fund was established to lift up the extraordinary, still continuing, conservation work of Clark Bullard over the past half century. It similarly emphasizes the vital importance to the conservation movement of citizen-led efforts to push for policy and legal reform at all public levels.

WHY BOBCATS?

BY KIM ERNDT-PITCHER

Someone once asked me, “Why do we need bobcats? They don’t do anything for us but kill.”



This is an important conversation, one that we should be having about many things in our world like rivers, migratory birds, insects, soil microbes, and much more. But, before I talk about WHY we need bobcats, let’s talk about WHAT a bobcat is first. What do bobcats do?

Historically, bobcats have been found from northern Mexico to southern Canada, and like many animals, their populations declined precipitously due to unchecked hunting and trapping. Thankfully, international and national laws have made strides to protect the world’s spotted cats. Today in the United States, in states where they are not listed as threatened or endangered, they are “protected” by hunting and trapping regulations. Their most recent and pressing threat, like so many other animals, is that of habitat loss, and in Illinois this is mainly due to agriculture.

Bobcats are typically what we call habitat generalists, meaning they utilize numerous landscapes to live, hunt, and breed. They are indeed valuable predators, and while rabbits and hares (which are very widely dispersed) comprise most of their diet, they occasionally eat other animals including rodents, bats, deer and some birds. They are roughly twice the size of your house cat, and can live 10-12 years. A bobcat’s home-range or territory varies by sex, with males roaming from 25-30 square miles and females about 5 square miles. Females often care for their young (1-6 kittens) in shallow rock outcroppings, hollowed out trees, fallen logs, or in abandoned earthen dens, of which there are typically several in a territory.

Now let’s get to the question of WHY we need bobcats, even beyond than their value as a predator. Many cultures in North America have tales and beliefs about bobcats. Native American folklore and history show them serving as symbols of vigilance, suspicion, and offering or representing clear vision in dark places, the ability to see through masks, and the ability to live in solitude. In a Shawnee tale, Rabbit, being trapped in a tree, tricks Bobcat into building a fire. The embers then scattered on his fur, leaving spots on his coat. To many people, even today, this cat symbolizes beauty, grace, and the wildness that was once all around us and that makes our environment work in a balanced rhythm.

We all know the value of a story. Stories have the power to disperse information, foster connection and oneness, bring us together and tear us apart. Stories have shaped the very world we live in today. They are quite literally how we shape the world in which we choose to live.

My story of the bobcat is one of awe, respect, and wholeness. I am happy, thrilled in fact, to know that the bobcat stalks the prairie and woods around my Southern Illinois home eating rabbits, raising young, leaving magical tracks in the snow for my children to stumble upon. They are part of the balance in a chaotic and increasingly unpredictable world. They are a success story, sharing to the world that we DO CARE and that we can protect the things we value and need, just as are our stories of the turkey, river otter, bald eagle, and believe it or not, the white-tailed deer here in Illinois. My story includes respect for this animal and the opportunity for me to teach my children about thriving, functioning ecosystems that we all live in and depend on. It is one of thankfulness that I am leaving them in a world that has bobcats. As a biologist, I have a basic understanding of their role. However, as a mother, my real job is teaching my children the value of the bobcat and of a world that embraces them. My job is letting my children not only carry the stories and images of bobcats from history, but also letting them create their own stories involving a life with this beautiful, stealthy, and special creature. //

You Can Protect Wildlife Big and Small
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Dear PRN Member,

We have big plans for 2017 as we celebrate our 50th Anniversary, and we need your help. We have two really easy ways for you to help.

1. Give a gift membership this holiday season!

PrairieRivers.org/Gift

Your gift membership to Prairie Rivers Network will include a set of 12 beautiful, color notecards and envelopes featuring 6 different nature landscapes from Illinois with information on the back about the picture and the conservation efforts your gift is supporting.



Help spread the word about Prairie Rivers Network.

Give a gift that is worth giving.



2. Be a fundraiser for clean water by joining our charity running (walking) team!

PrairieRivers.org/Run

Our 2017 Run/Walk for Clean Water is a fundraiser for Prairie Rivers Network associated with the Christie Clinic Illinois Marathon, April 20-22, 2017. You walk or run in one of the races at the Illinois Marathon and ask for donations from family and friends to sponsor your charity walk/run. It is that easy. You can walk the 5K or 10K or run the 1/2 marathon or full marathon.

BUT I DON'T LIKE TO ASK FOR MONEY, ISN'T THAT HARD TO DO?

It's easy! Look at all the people who have participated in this fundraiser and raised over \$35,000 for clean water and healthy rivers. It is amazing how much money you can raise just by sending out a few emails. Think of it this way, would you mind if your nephew, cousin, friend, or co-worker sent an email to you asking you to donate \$25 to a good cause? Probably not. This is a great way to support a cause you believe in (clean water) and help spread the word about the good work that we are doing.



5K | 10K | Half | Full | Relay | Youth Run

Walk or Run. It's easy. It's fun. It's important.

Help Celebrate 50 Years of Prairie Rivers Network with a Charity Run/Walk for Clean Water. We need you now more than ever!

