

Protecting Illinois' Rivers for People, Fish, and Wildlife

MORE THAN 50,000 ACRES OF WETLANDS SAVED

PRN AND PARTNERS STOP THE NEW MADRID LEEVEE

BY KIM KNOWLES

Great news regarding the New Madrid levee project! In a valiant final act to protect both people and wildlife, the Obama Administration issued a decision making it nearly impossible for the Army Corps of Engineers to build the New Madrid levee.

If built, the levee would have cut off a vitally important connection between the Mississippi River and its backwater habitat, destroying more than 50,000 acres of wetlands that give life to hundreds of species of fish, waterfowl, and migratory birds, like the wood duck chicks pictured below. The connection is the last of its kind in Missouri. The levee would have increased the risk of flooding to towns like Cairo, Olive Branch, and Metropolis. Residents in each of these towns have seen their homes and livelihoods destroyed by past flooding. With one of President Obama's final acts, this habitat and these communities will be spared.



Insurmountable Obstacles

Through the Council on Environmental Quality, the Obama Administration brokered an agreement between the Army Corps of Engineers and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service setting forth key requirements the Army Corps must meet in order to construct the project. The requirements call for the creation of a new river connection on the Mississippi River that would allow fish unrestricted access to the floodplain, the preservation of a natural hydrologic connection between the Mississippi River and Big Oak Tree State Park, and maintenance of natural flooding in the New Madrid Floodway. All very tall orders.

We believe these requirements create insurmountable obstacles to the building of the New Madrid levee.

A Collaborative Campaign

How did we accomplish this great victory? In every sense of the word, it was truly a collaborative effort. Prairie Rivers Network gives a special shout out to the National Wildlife Federation for its stellar leadership, and to the citizens and leaders of

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Cairo, Olive Branch, Mounds, and Metropolis. Key partners also include: the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (IL and MO), American Rivers, Great Rivers Environmental Law Center, Illinois Sierra Club, Great Rivers Habitat Alliance, and the Missouri Coalition for the Environment.

Together, we employed a variety of strategies with key members of Congress, federal and state agency directors, community leaders, and environmental groups. We used Capitol Hill visits, agency meetings, phone calls, citizen petitions, earned media, and a robust social media campaign. And together we did #stopthelevee.

In these troubling times, we must take time to celebrate our victories and take solace in the strength of our collaborations. And if need be, we'll rise up once again and resist any attempt to resurrect the New Madrid Levee. //

CAROL'S CURRENTS

Leading Beyond Our Sightline

Last fall, I was privileged to be selected for the Environmental Leadership Program, a national leadership development program for professionals in all fields of environmental protection and education, conservation, sustainability, and social justice. In February, I graduated to senior fellow status, joining the 1000+ other fellows now working across the nation to grow and diversify the environmental movement. For two intensive weeks over the past six months, my cohort of thirteen reflected on our strengths; learned and practiced collaborative leadership skills that promote self, team, and organizational effectiveness; and strategized how each of us will accomplish our big dreams for environmental and social justice and how to help others become part of the movement with us. And last weekend, I joined over 160 women from across the National Wildlife Federation to find and declare our voices as leaders in conservation, preparing to build and lead a newly dedicated, diverse conservation movement.

These experiences helped me renew and hone powerful skills, but more importantly, they taught me the power of connections. This power lies in the strength that comes from sharing dreams and struggles, in the optimism that emerges when we reframe our challenges as opportunities, and in the act of empowering each other to bring our collective light into the world.

At PRN we seek out creative ways to connect with and inspire people to action; to change what they can where they are. As a result, we find people of all ages and backgrounds who forge ahead with innovative, creative ways to inspire and make changes that support healthier lands, water, wildlife, and communities. Their energy shows up in unexpected places and results in ripples of inspired action that extend far beyond their efforts. Through them, I am constantly reminded that leadership begins with each of us, but its power extends far beyond the horizon of our sightline to places we may never ourselves see. That is what the power of hope looks like.

Carol



Women in Conservation Leadership Summit
March 17 – 19, 2017



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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PRN WELCOMES NEW STAFF

PRN expanded its staff in February with the hires of Catie Gregg and Jeff Kohmstedt.

Catie joins PRN as an Agricultural Programs Specialist coordinating our campaign to expand the adoption of conservation cropping systems in Illinois. Prior to joining PRN, she worked on agricultural conservation issues at the Ford County Soil and Water Conservation District where she held outreach events on cover crops, soil health, prairie habitat, and water quality. She also helped farmers establish over 1,500 new acres of habitat projects on their farms.



By managing for soil health, farmers are better able to decrease their environmental impact while making their farms more resilient. PRN works with partners across Illinois to encourage farmers

to try new conservation practices and to find ones that work for their farms. Catie's work will support this effort.

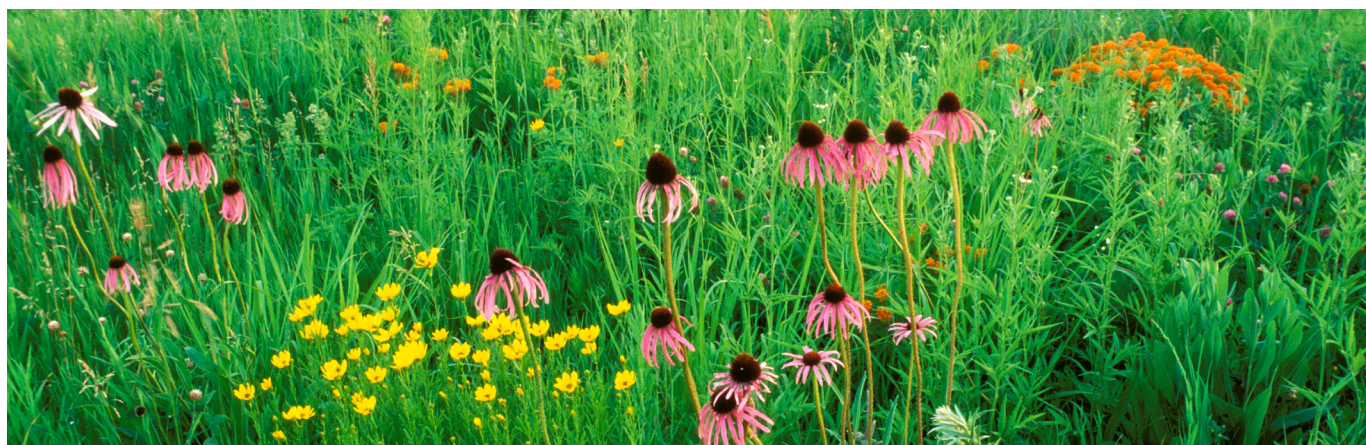


Jeff joins PRN as a Communications and Outreach Coordinator where he will organize our communications activities, social media initiatives, and outreach events. Previously, he served as outreach coordinator for the Illinois New Teacher Collaborative on the campus of the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Prior to that, he worked as a grassroots lobbyist at a national trade association in Washington, D.C. and as an adjunct English faculty member at four universities and colleges. His past writing and communications experience will help unify PRN's public messaging. //

WHY I GIVE TO PRAIRIE RIVERS NETWORK

JORIE EMORY

I discovered Prairie Rivers Network after moving back to Illinois from out of state. My own work deals with river conservation at the national level, and I was looking for a way to connect my passion for clean water at the local level. What I found at PRN is a dedicated and visionary staff, boldly committed to protecting our rivers and drinking water. I love Carol's energy for new ideas and her follow-through for turning ideas into successful programs. Like many Illinoisans, I worry about whether coal ash and leaking pipelines will pose a threat to the water I drink, and so I give to PRN because I trust their expertise and commitment to reducing these risks and broadening public awareness of water issues. //



COVERING ITS OWN ASH

DYNEGY PLANS TO LEAVE LEGACY OF WASTE ACROSS ILLINOIS

BY ANDREW REHN

Dynergy plans to leave a legacy of waste in our state. Dynergy is a Texas-based energy production company that owns eleven coal-fired power plants in Illinois, either directly or through its subsidiaries. These eleven power plants have 42 coal ash impoundments containing over 70 million cubic yards of toxic coal ash!

The Illinois coal ash rules, which would provide additional guidance on the fate of coal disposal in the state, are still in development. Dynergy bets on Illinois having weak rules that will allow it to leave their dumps for the public to clean up one day.

Coal ash is the solid byproduct left over after coal is burned for electricity. It is much like the ash from a wood-burning fire, except coal ash contains toxic materials like mercury, arsenic, selenium, cadmium, and chromium.

The majority of Dynergy's coal ash is stored in unlined impoundments. Without a liner, there is no barrier between the coal ash and the groundwater around the impoundment. Water can easily flow through the coal ash and become contaminated. Unlined (and some lined) sites pollute Illinois' groundwater for their entire lifespan. Toxic materials like mercury or arsenic leach into the groundwater and into rivers. Violation of groundwater standards has been identified at many unlined impoundment sites across the state.

Dynergy proposes closing these sites via "cap in place," a procedure where a waterproof layer is placed atop the ash. The company thinks this solves the problem, but it doesn't.

Putting a cap over an unlined impoundment is like trying to stay dry by bringing an umbrella with you into a pool. Without an underlying liner, the coal ash will continue to pollute groundwater. Dynergy's plan would leave Illinois' water sources forever exposed to coal ash contamination.

THE FIRST BATTLEFIELDS

By federal law, all coal ash impoundments in Illinois will eventually need to be closed, and Dynergy recently disclosed



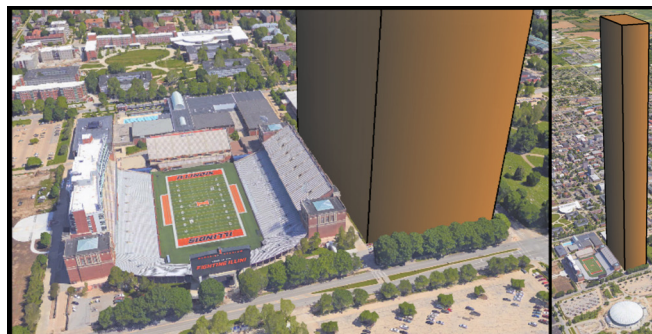
A 40-acre coal ash impoundment at the Vermilion Power Station is outlined in red. It is one of three at the site. The power plant in the background provides a sense of scale.

that they are already moving forward with closure plans at thirteen coal ash impoundments across five plant sites in Illinois: Baldwin, Coffeen, Duck Creek, Hennepin and Wood River.

Additionally, we know Dynergy has proposed impoundment closure plans at the shuttered Vermilion Power Station on the Middle Fork of the Vermilion River where seepage from the coal ash is visible on the river banks.

All together, these plans will leave 23 million cubic yards of ash permanently unprotected in Illinois and exposed to groundwater and potentially surface water through groundwater channels. To visualize that number, we've illustrated what all that ash would look like piled next to the University of Illinois' Memorial Stadium. The pile of coal ash would stand over half a mile tall!

Dynergy isn't the only company with coal ash waste in Illinois, and it isn't the only company planning to cap in place instead of removing the ash. However, Dynergy has the most ash in Illinois, both by volume of ash and by total number of sites. This is Dynergy's problem to solve, not the public's. And right now their cap in place closure plans will leave groundwater pollution that future generations will have to solve. If we teach our children to clean up after



PRN DAY AT ALLERTON: PROTECTING OUR LAND, WATER AND WILDLIFE

A 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF STEWARDSHIP

Imagine a world where your favorite park was destroyed by a dam that flooded and killed a once vibrant woods and healthy ecosystem. A dire scene indeed! This would have been the fate for part of Allerton Park in Monticello if not for the dedicated leadership of Bruce and Patricia Hannon and the many citizen activists they inspired to save the park and surrounding land. Fifty years ago, the Hannons helped establish the Committee on Allerton Park, the group that ultimately stopped the damming of the Sangamon River which saved thousands of acres of woods and farmland. The group took on powerful interests and prevailed. Their victory saved a special place and changed many lives. Join us as we celebrate the power of stewardship where it all began 50 years ago.

Help us celebrate PRN Day at Allerton on May 21st from 12:00 to 4:00 pm (rain or shine) at the Allerton Park Music Barn, 588 Allerton Road, Monticello, Illinois 61856.

This free, family-friendly event includes:

- A nature walk with Environmental Almanac writer/photographer and PRN board member Rob Kanter

- A guided birding walk with local birder and PRN member David Thomas
- *The Water Project*, an ensemble performance developed by local director and civic theater advocate, Latrelle Bright, examining our relationship with water
- A sampling of locally-produced honey and locally-grown artisanal grain breads
- An art and photography exhibit by local artists and photographers
- *A River of Hope: Save a Place. Change Your Life.* a multimedia reflection on 50 years of stewardship, including readings from Prairie Rivers Network member Amy Hassinger's new novel, *After the Dam*

See the day's schedule at prairierivers.org/fifty/#allerton.

Bring your picnic basket and enjoy an ecosystem saved by a committed group of activists. Their life of stewardship inspires us today! //

Continued from page 4

themselves, shouldn't we create rules that make for-profit companies do the same?

This is why a strong Illinois coal ash rule is so crucial. We need rules that legitimately consider alternatives to cap in place -- especially where groundwater already saturates the coal ash. We need rules that give the public a voice during the closure process. We need rules that hold Dynegy accountable for the economic costs of their waste dumps. Anything less is corporate welfare at taxpayers' expense.

That's why Prairie Rivers Network and partners have been fighting so hard for stronger coal ash rules in Illinois, and why we continue to do so. //

GOOD LUCK, RUNNERS AND WALKERS!

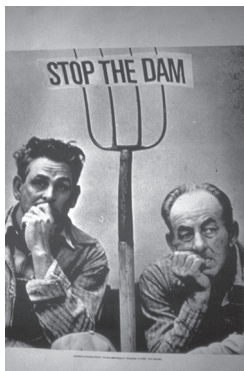
ILLINOIS MARATHON WEEKEND APRIL 20-22

This month, runners and walkers will take to the streets of Champaign-Urbana for the Christie Clinic Illinois Marathon weekend, and we can't wait to cheer on our team! PRN is a charity partner with the marathon, and participants can raise funds for us. Last year, Team PRN raised more than \$7,000. Thank you to all of our charity runners and their donors. It's not too late to donate, visit prairierivers.org/run to support the team and protect clean water.

Do you want to raise funds for PRN but don't want to participate in the Illinois Marathon? You can, and it's much easier than you think! Visit prairierivers.org/fundraise to learn how. //

PRAIRIE RIVERS NETWORK

In 1967, the proposed Oakley Reservoir on the Sangamon River was the catalyst for creating the organization that would later become Prairie Rivers Network. That year, Bruce and Patricia Hannon and others collected 20,000 signatures in a petition drive to stop the dam that would have put hundreds of acres of Allerton Park underwater. In September of that year, the Committee on Allerton Park held its first meeting at the Hannon home in Champaign, organizing to oppose the dam. Two years later, the Committee invited conservationist



and U.S. Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas to the park, and in the spring of 1969 he hiked the park with many dam opponents and local and national news media. *Playboy Magazine, Field and Stream, Atlantic*

Monthly, Time, and the Christian Science Monitor all carried stories about the "Battle for the Sangamon," the grassroots effort that ultimately stopped the dam in 1985.

1960s



Sangamon River



1970s



Illinois River

Chicago River

Realizing that locally focused efforts alone could not stop the Oakley Dam, the Committee formed a sister organization called the Coalition on American Rivers (COAR) to oppose similar Army Corps of Engineers projects throughout the Midwest. As a 501(c)4 organization, COAR was able to lobby in Washington and at the state level. Under the leadership of John Marlin, the first paid executive director, the two organizations united people across political and social boundaries to protect rivers from federal water resources projects. By the end of the decade, the message had gotten through to most Americans: water projects were not always sound and many were simply wasteful.

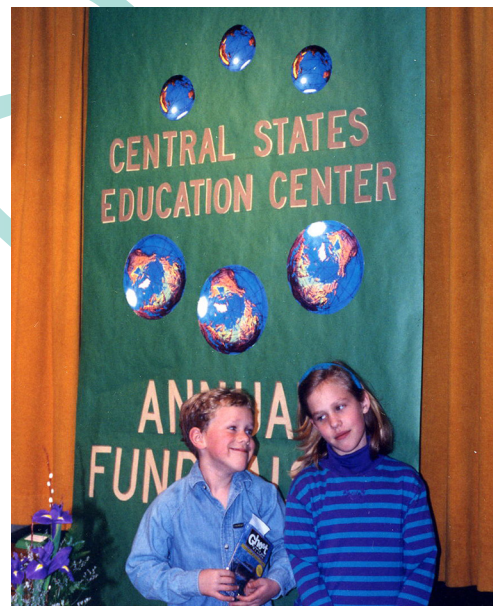


In 1984, under the leadership of new executive director John Thompson, the Committee on Allerton Park was renamed Central States Education Center (CSEC) to reflect its attention to other sources of waterway degradation, including run-off from agriculture, urban areas, and landfills. CSEC staff provided



technical information and organizing assistance to grassroots groups, most in rural and economically depressed communities, working to prevent the siting of poorly designed landfills and halting the proposed low-level radioactive waste disposal site in Martinsville.

1980s



50 YEARS OF STEWARDSHIP



Kaskaskia River

Under executive directors Jean Flemma in 2003 and Glynnis Collins in 2008, membership and programs expanded. PRN successfully pressured the state to adopt limits on phosphorous discharges by municipal sewage facilities and blocked efforts to weaken existing standards on dissolved oxygen. The successful conclusion of a multi-party lawsuit brought against Dynegy/Midwest Generation resulted in tougher limits on mercury emissions and permanent protection of 1,100 acres of land along the Middle Fork of the Vermilion River, Illinois' only Wild and Scenic River. In 2007, Bruce Hannon retired as president of the board of directors after nearly 40 years of service.



2000s

1990s

In the 1990s, CSEC led a wide-ranging effort to reduce the need for landfills by reducing the generation of waste. Between 1991 and 1996, the organization's Model Community Program helped more than 300 Illinois and Indiana industries, retail stores, schools, and agencies reduce the waste they shipped to landfills by 20 to 86 percent.

With organizing assistance from the national River Network and CSEC board member Clark Bullard, CSEC helped grassroots organizations work to restore and protect Illinois' rivers and streams. Rob Moore became executive director of CSEC in 1997 and expanded this focus, partnering with grassroots groups to push for enforcement of the Clean Water Act and other environmental laws to protect local streams. In the next few years the organization achieved notable success with these



initiatives and attracted increasing support from individuals and granting agencies that shared this mission. In the late 1990s, CSEC forged an alliance with the National Wildlife Federation, ultimately becoming its Illinois affiliate in 2001. CSEC changed its name to Prairie Rivers Network in 1998.

Mississippi River



2010s

In 2014, the National Wildlife Federation named PRN the Affiliate of the Year. Carol Hays was hired as executive director in 2015, and PRN achieved a major victory when the New Madrid Levee was stopped in 2016, saving 50,000 acres of wetlands. PRN continues to expand its membership and influence in Illinois as public concern about water quality, environmental impacts, river health, and wildlife protection continues to rise.



2016 PRN Members & Supporters

We are grateful to all of our members, partners, donors, and funders whose financial gifts in 2016 helped fund our important work. We could not do the work we do without you. Thank you for protecting our rivers and streams! Your annual support ensures that the fight for clean water, healthy rivers, and wildlife habitat continues.

The Prairie Rivers Network Legacy Society

Ann Boisclair and Jeffrey Jens
Irene and Clark Bullard
Ellyn and David Bullock
Brenda and Nathan Cheney
Glynnis Collins and Nick Brozovic
Jane and Eric Freyfogle
John Gilpin
Nancy Goodall
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Heather and Fran Harty

Susan and Lewis Hopkins
Anna Keck and Jason Lindsey
Rosemary Laughlin
Jon McNussen
Becky Mead
Kathryn Pilhofer
Renée Potter
Glen Summers
Bill Van Hagey
Carol Goodall Wock

A special thank you to our members who have contributed to the Prairie Rivers Network Endowment. Your gift is an investment in Illinois' future.



Stephanie and Ralph Alexander
The Bales Family
Irene and Clark Bullard
Ellyn and David Bullock
Glynnis Collins and Nick Brozovic
Bill Davey
David Delaney
Jean Flemma and John Epifanio
Susan Vitka and Peter Fox-Penner
Jane and Eric Freyfogle
John B. Gilpin
Nancy Goodall
Bruce Hannon
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DiAnne and Terry Hatch
Carol and Scott Hays
Susan and Lewis Hopkins
Dixie and Gary Jackson
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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.

Businesses

Platinum \$5,000 and above

Common Ground Food Co-op
Just Say Joy (Joy Schmoll Designs)

Gold \$1,000–\$4,999

Erich Adickes Photography
Enterprise Holdings Foundation
Fox Development Corporation
Marco Technical Documentation
Patagonia (via Champaign Surplus)
Share Power Responsible Investing
(Nancy Dietrich and Russ Rybicki)
UpClose Marketing and Printing

Silver \$500–\$999

Anderson Farms
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First Mid-Illinois Bank & Trust
The Upper Bout

Bronze \$250–\$499

Neutral Cycle

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Ole Neesby Construction Company
The Station Theatre
Webber & Thies, P.C. Lawyers, in honor of
Carol Goodall Wock
White on Wood (Derek Pankau)

Groups/Public Entities

Bangs Lake Advisory Committee
Central Eastern Illinois Beekeepers
Association
First Presbyterian Church of Urbana
Illinois Smallmouth Alliance
Laborers Local Union #393
Middlefork Audubon Society
Northwest Illinois Audubon Society
Prairie Group of the Sierra Club
Prairieland Anglers Association
Student Environmental Action Coalition at
Illinois State University
Vermilion County Conservation District
Wellington Avenue United Church of Christ
Wesley United Methodist Church

Grantors

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Grand Victoria Foundation
Illinois Environmental Council (ReAmp)
Illinois Humanities Council
National Wildlife Federation
Rockefeller Family Fund
The Educational Foundation of America
The Lumpkin Family Foundation
The McKnight Foundation
Walton Family Foundation

Other

AmazonSmile, EarthShare Illinois, Schnucks

Thank You for Making a Difference

Headwaters Circle

\$5,000 and above

Irene and Clark Bullard
William J. Davey
Jane and Eric Freyfogle
Anna Keck and Jason Lindsey

Chris and David Main
Jon McNussen
Carol Goodall Wock

River Champions

\$2,500–\$4,999

Nancy Goodall

Ann Graffagna and Don Harrahan

River Protectors

\$1,000–\$2,499

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Susan and Lewis Hopkins
Dixie and Gary Jackson
Ann Boisclair and Jeffrey Jens, *in memory of Michael Scully and Charles Goodall*
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Annice Moses and Michael Rosenthal
Trent Shepard
David and Julie Sherwood
Sue and Tom Smith
Carol and David Thomas
William Van Hagey
Sherry M. Weaver
Katie Zimmerman

River Stewards

\$500–\$999

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River Guardians

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Beth Wentzel and Todd Ambs
Rachel Whitaker and Stephen Wald
Gretka and Ralph Wolfe

A special thank you to our Miles for Monarchs Fundraising Team that raised \$7,000+ at the Illinois Marathon in 2016: Camp No Scouts (Diza Baryshnikov, Emil LeBauer, Elliana Moore, Theodore Nevins, Kavi Patel, Miles Sola), First Presbyterian Church of Urbana Earth Care Team (David Bullock, Bob Burger, Liz Greeley, Dixie and Gary Jackson, David Sherwood, Case Sprenkle, Linda Williams), Andrea Fain, Jean Flemma, Carol and Scott Hays, Rob Kanter, Nudelman Family, Erin Slifer. **And a sincere thank you to our volunteers:** Latrelle Bright, Emma Eichelman, Chris Graham, and Joy Schmolli.

River Defenders

\$100–\$249

Anonymous (6)	Victoria Pifalo and Kieran Donaghy	Karen Koenig	Rutherford Farms
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<i>in memory of Wayne Tipword</i>	Susan and Ron Kiddoo	Brenda and Keith Rohl	Dwain Berggren
Harold Diamond	Beverly and George H. Kieffer	Verlyn and Paul Rosenberger	Linda Zimmerman
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EARTH DAY

April 22

Earth Day is a great opportunity to make a difference, introduce a friend to our rivers, and renew your commitment to being a good steward!

EARTH DAY HAPPY HOUR

April 20

Koh-i-Noor Restaurant
6 E Columbia St, Champaign

RUN FOR YOUR RIVERS

ILLINOIS MARATHON

April 21 & 22

Run, walk, or donate.
prairierivers.org/run

MARCH FOR SCIENCE

April 22

5 PM, Orpheum Museum, Champaign
10 AM, Congress and Michigan Ave, Chicago
1 PM, Illinois State Capitol, Springfield

PEOPLE'S CLIMATE MARCH

April 29

2 PM, West Side Park, Champaign
12 PM, Federal Plaza, Chicago
12:30 PM, Carbondale

PRN DAY AT ALLERTON

May 21

12 to 4 PM Allerton Park Music Barn
Monticello
Free, no tickets required.

WILD & SCENIC FILM FESTIVAL

9/22, Carbondale
10/13, Peoria

PRN 50TH ANNIVERSARY GALA

October 6
I Hotel & Conference Center
Champaign

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