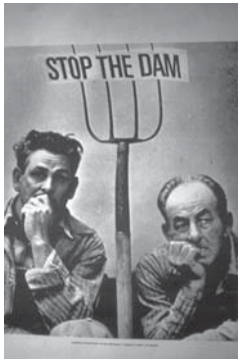


PRAIRIE RIVERS NETWORK

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.



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.

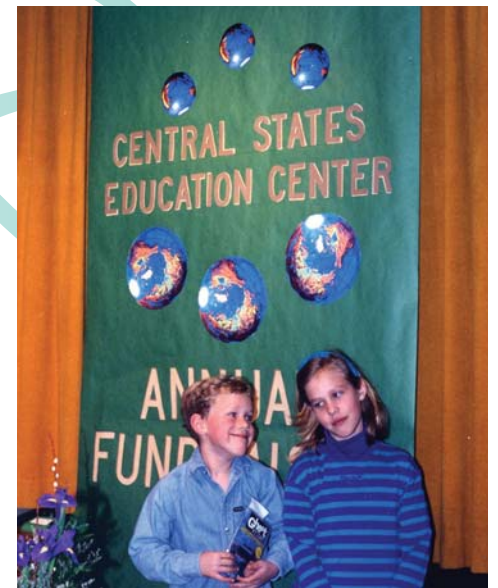
1980s

1970s

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.



Chicago River



Illinois River

1960s

Sangamon River

50 YEARS OF STEWARDSHIP



Kaskaskia River



2000s

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.



2010s

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



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.

