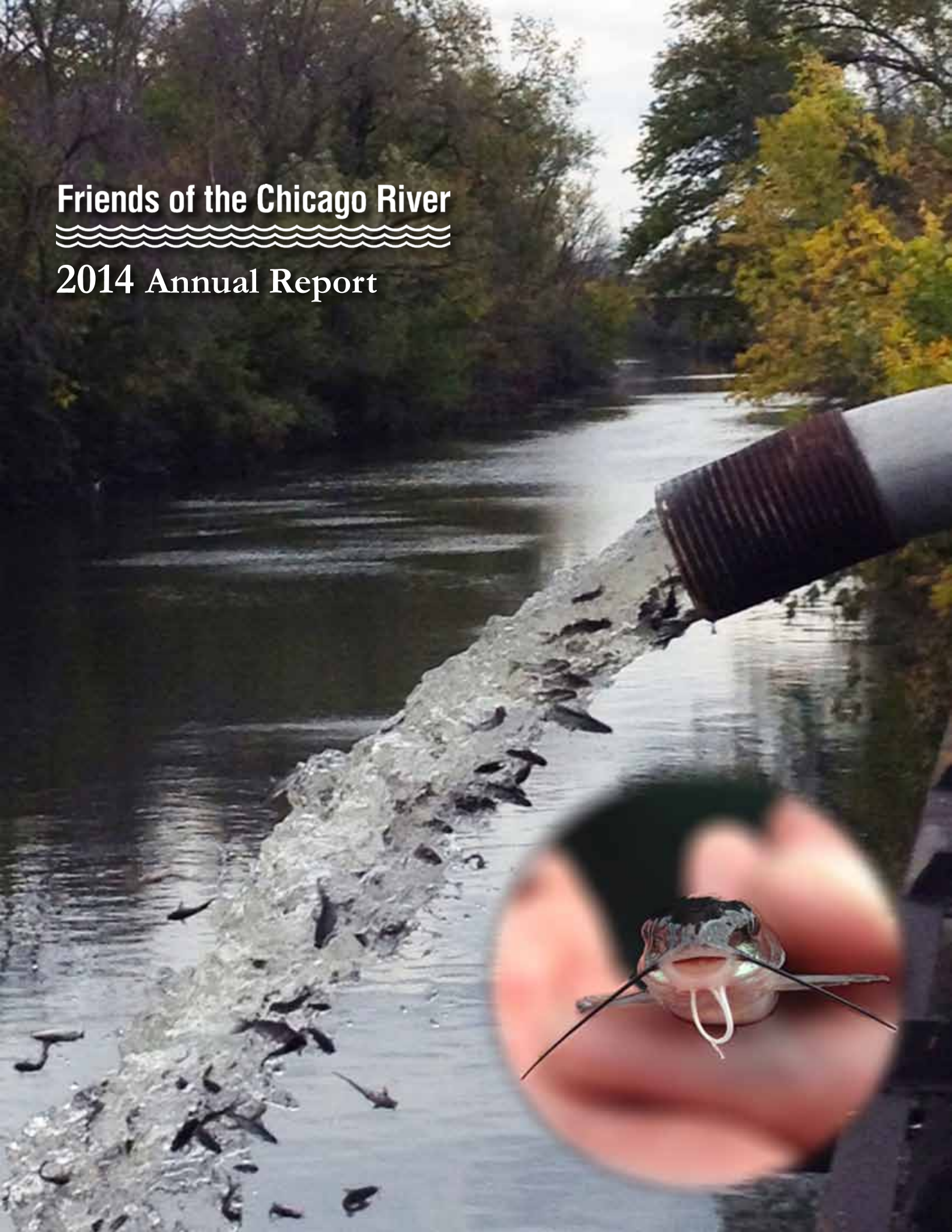


Friends of the Chicago River



2014 Annual Report



INTRODUCTION

Friends of the Chicago River is very proud that we finished FY2014 successfully with a positive balance; a 16% increase in Big Fish Ball income; the launch of our new major donor program, The Otter Society; and a record 20,000 visitors to our Bridgehouse Museum. In addition, Friends completed a 54 acre restoration project at Kickapoo Woods and embarked on ambitious habitat projects including the release of 100,000 channel cat fish and installation of nesting cavities and major habitat initiatives for osprey, turtles, and bats. A hard working staff, deeply committed board of directors, and thousands of members, advocates, volunteers, and contributors made this possible.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Celebrating Wildness

On Tuesday, June 10 Friends of the Chicago River and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) released 30,000 one-year-old channel catfish into the Chicago River system as the first step in a spawning habitat restoration project funded by a \$300,000 grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Chi-Cal Rivers Fund. The project, which includes the installation of 400 constructed nesting cavities for channel cats at eight locations ranging from the North Shore Channel to the Little Calumet River, will help this critical species repopulate the system after years of degradation limited its breeding success. Ten thousand were released at the confluence downtown and 20,000 were released into the Little Calumet River. Over the next 18 months another 70,000 fish will be released throughout the system. In addition to the channel cat fish release, Friends has also received major funding to increase habitat for osprey, turtles, and bats.



Friends and IDNR have released thousands of catfish into the Chicago River. (Photo credit: MWRD/Dan Wendt)



Friends is installing Osprey nesting platforms along the river to encourage reproduction.



A great horned owl, an essential wild species, makes an appearance at Friends' Big Fish Ball. (Photo credit: Ben Gonzales)

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Chicago River Schools Network

The Chicago River Schools Network (CRSN) impacted over 18,000 students through field trip assistance, classroom presentations, and service learning projects as well as through training workshops, curricula and lesson plans, and customized assistance for teachers. Our emphasis on stewardship, even for the youngest students, demonstrates that even one person's action can make a difference in the river's health. In partnership with over 300 teachers from 200 schools, Friends is pleased to have exceeded our FY2014 goals for engaging students in local environmental issues and activities that solve everyday problems facing the river. Online data collection continues to be an essential component of the program, providing another resource for teachers and students to document and share their data with other schools.



*Lincoln Park High School students identifying macroinvertebrates.
(Photo credit: Peoples Gas staff photographer)*

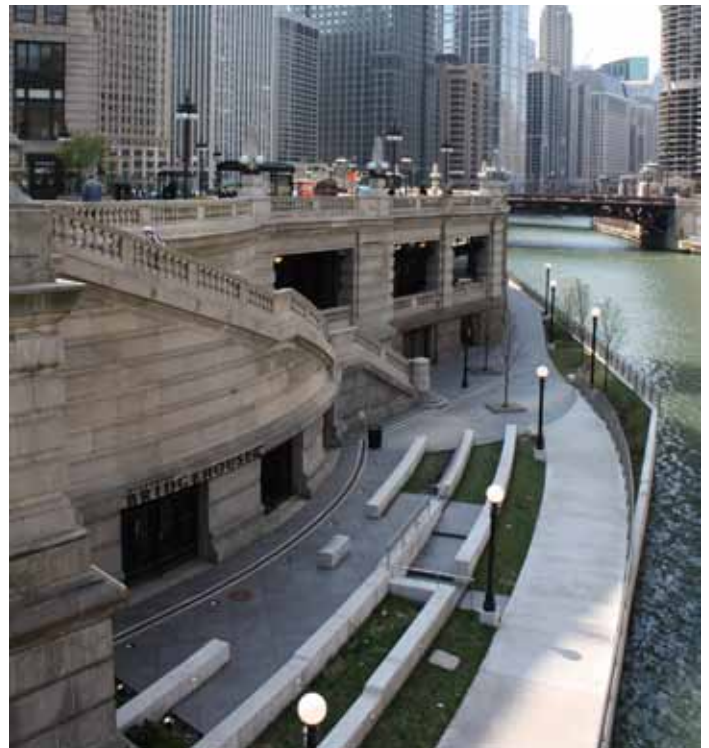


*Lincoln Park High School students testing water quality at the river.
(Photo credit: Peoples Gas staff photographer)*

McCormick Bridgehouse & Chicago River Museum

Friends' Bridgehouse Museum celebrates the Chicago River and its world-famous movable bridges, and offers visitors a one-of-a-kind opportunity to explore a historic landmark bridgehouse. The museum's prominent location, intriguing physical space, and engaging exhibits help strengthen Friends' visibility and financial base as well as broaden the impact of river education. Additionally, the museum serves as a gateway to Friends' other resources and programs, which include take-home informational materials, river-based curricula, and river trips for thousands of school children, educational paddling trips, volunteer opportunities for hands-on river clean-up, riverbank restoration, and much more.

Open every spring through fall in the southwest tower of the Michigan Avenue Bridge, the museum attracted a record number of 20,537 visitors during the FY2014 season. This year, the museum opened a second entrance on Michigan Avenue and instituted Free Sundays to make the river's story accessible to all. Special events such as the Michigan Avenue Bridge anniversary celebration or our partnership with the Chicago Architecture Foundation's Open House Chicago festival highlighted the river's significance to broad new audiences. The Bridgehouse Museum Committee hosted its second annual Eve of the Solstice Benefit Cruise, which raised nearly \$17,000 for museum operations.



The view from the Michigan Avenue Bridge with Friends' Bridgehouse Museum below.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Urban Canoe Adventures

Thirty dedicated and experienced volunteer canoe guides provided on the water experiences for 1,400 paddlers, including individuals and families as well as school, civic, and corporate groups. On the water adventures ranged throughout the river system, from the Skokie Lagoons in Northfield to the downtown canyons of the Loop to Wampum Lake in Thornton. Our partner organizations include the Forest Preserves of Cook County and the Chicago Park District. This year, several of our guides were certified as instructors through the American Canoe Association. This provides them with a nationally recognized standard of paddling skills, safety, and instruction techniques that they are able to apply on our programs.



A happy paddler enjoys Friends' and Leinenkugel's Canoes for a Cause. (Photo credit: Ashley Carol Fingerbut)

Explore Chicago River

Friends launched the second phase of Explore Chicago River in June, a dynamic online map of the Chicago River watershed that highlights recreational activities, advocacy opportunities as well as the myriad of work and play happenings throughout the watershed. From hiking and biking trails along the river to restoration activities and

projects, Explore serves as the go-to guide for what's happening in, on, and around the Chicago River. Phase two is specifically designed to further engage and draw in new audiences.



Two young paddlers at Powderhorn Lake receive junior guide status after helping out other paddlers.



Paddlers near the finish line of Canoes for a Cause, Friends' paddling partnership event with Leinenkugel. (Photo credit: Ashley Carol Fingerbut)

Clean Water Advocacy

Friends continues to work to ensure that the improvements in water quality standards and habitat that were approved by the Illinois Pollution Control Board (IPCB) are implemented on schedule. Disinfection is on track at the O'Brien and Calumet water reclamation plants with work to be completed by December 2015. As part of the proceedings, the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District committed to financing habitat improvement projects that will help improve fish habitat to increase numbers and species of fish. These actions set in motion the final phase of upgrading the water quality and habitat conditions of the Chicago River. We also continue to advocate for green infrastructure and responsible stormwater management and last October our advocacy efforts paid off when the Watershed Management Ordinance (WMO) passed and then became effective May 1.

Our progress over the last few years has reaffirmed that people value clean water and that advocacy, even if the odds seem stacked against you, is a valuable tool to invoke positive change. Friends is constantly assessing how to utilize these shifts in momentum to drive positive change and further river improvements. Friends' success on these fronts has demonstrated the tremendous value of long-term strategic planning to focus our efforts and better leverage partnerships and collaborations to multiply the effectiveness and impact of our efforts. Friends is also working with its partners including the MWRD, to develop strategy to address stormwater using a collaborative model on a regional scale.



A beautiful fall day along the North Branch in Harms Woods.

Aquatic Invasive Species

Faced with the threat of 29 identified aquatic invasive species from both the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins, Friends' commitment to finding a solution that prevents the transference of aquatic invasive species, with a focus on Asian carp, is as strong as ever. Through our engagement with the Chicago Area Waterway System (CAWS) Advisory Committee we interact with pertinent federal, state, and local agencies to advocate for solutions that protect and improve the Chicago River's water quality, viability, and habitat. At the same time, Friends also serves as a member of the federal Technical and Policy Working Group Committee to stay informed and advocate for solutions that protect and improve the Chicago River's water quality, viability, and habitat.



More paddlers enjoying Friends' and Leinenkugel's partner event Canoes for a Cause. (Photo credit: Ashley Carol Fingerhut)

Land Use Analysis

The MWRD currently owns 12,000 acres of land throughout the Chicago metropolitan area of which a majority are in the Chicago River watershed. Over the last two years Friends and Openlands worked together to identify and develop a system to help the MWRD manage their land with stormwater, conservation, and recreation filters. During FY2014, we completed the parcel level assessment of the 12,000 acres of MWRD parcels and conducted field visits to verify and augment the information from the assessment. In March 2014 we met with MWRD Executive Director David St. Pierre and key MWRD staff to present our findings and receive feedback from their team. They were very receptive and expressed interest in integrating this tool into their assessment work.

ON THE GROUND PROJECTS

Chicago River Day

Several thousand volunteers participated in Friends' 22nd annual Chicago River Day. Participants included corporate teams, community organizations, school groups, families, and individuals of various ability and age levels from throughout the 673-square mile Chicago River watershed. Through over 6,000 hours of volunteer action, Chicago River Day resulted in both immediate and long-term improvements to the ecological health of the river. Event activities ranged from repairing river edge trails to removing tons of garbage, recyclables, and harmful invasive plants to learning to create rain gardens and install rain barrels for home water conservation.



A young Chicago River Day volunteer removes invasive garlic mustard.



A centennial volunteer removing invasives at Kickapoo Woods along the Little Calumet River.

Gullywalkers

Friends recruited and trained over 100 volunteer Gullywalkers to identify and document gullies along accessible segments of the riverbank owned by the FPCC. Volunteers walked over 45 out of a total of 64.6 possible miles of riverbank in the Cook County Forest Preserves with the remaining 30% deemed inaccessible. Throughout the project area they identified and assessed 139 gullies. That data has been aggregated into a spreadsheet where it can be sorted by location, severity, length, width, depth, etc. The final report will include a priority ranking system of identified gullies to drive future restoration projects and land management decisions. Gullies lead to increased soil erosion and the destruction of the natural landscape and the Chicago River.



Measuring a gully at Kickapoo Woods.

Centennial Volunteers

Friends is also currently partnering with Friends of the Forest Preserves, the Forest Preserves of Cook County (FPCC) and Chicago Audubon Region on a two year, volunteer engagement project called "Centennial Volunteers." Named in recognition of the important legacy of the FPCC and its centennial celebration, this project will leave in place dedicated stewards to manage and monitor five pre-selected river-edge sites located in the FPCC. This partnership began in May 2014 with Chicago River Day and will continue until the end of 2015.

ON THE GROUND PROJECTS

River Volunteer Stewardship Program

The River Volunteer Stewardship Program (RVSP) forms the backbone of Friends' volunteer and restoration efforts. RVSP emphasizes restoration and engagement.

Complementary in nature, these two ideals enable Friends to better restore and improve natural lands along the Chicago River, promote Best Management Practices (BMPs) both at and beyond the river's edge, and increase public support of the Chicago River and open space in general. RVSP utilizes volunteers to restore river-edge forest preserves to show what is possible along the river's banks. In addition, participants learn what they can do to help the river and mitigate climate change impacts. On-site activities also focus on educating and empowering local stewards to maintain improvements for long-term impact.

There are two main components under the umbrella of RVSP: Chicago River Eco Warriors (CREW) and River Action Days (formerly "corporate workdays"). CREW is designed to further engage volunteers to ultimately become multipliers of our mission. Through CREW, we track volunteer participation across all Friends' programs and activities, rewarding volunteers for their service and commitment to the river. CREW members represent Friends' most dedicated and active volunteers, engaging in a variety of activities including restoration, assisting at Friends' sponsored events, taking action on river issues, serving on committees, and leading paddling trips.



MillerCoors volunteers at their company's annual day of service which is focused on water and the river.

The second component of RVSP are River Action Days, which provide business and community groups with customized volunteer restoration experiences. During FY2014, Friends' staff facilitated 11 River Action Days (seven corporate groups and four CREW workdays) with a total of 549 volunteers participating at our Edgebrook Woods and Kickapoo Woods demonstration sites. Projects ranged from invasive plant removal to stream bank restoration to rain garden installation. These events are designed to introduce people to the river while building a sense of ownership and connection with the natural world and improve the health of the river.

Kickapoo Woods

In addition to our ongoing work at Edgebrook Woods, Friends restored and revitalized 54 acres of land adjacent to the Little Calumet River at Kickapoo Woods. We worked diligently with contractors and volunteers to restore a native, natural landscape at Kickapoo Woods. This work included the clearing of invasive species, primarily buckthorn and garlic mustard, across the entire site. After the invasive plants were cleared from the site, an aggressive revegetation effort took place as conditions allowed. This new plant community is revitalizing the ability of the site to infiltrate and filter stormwater before it reaches the Little Calumet River. Additionally, Friends monitors water quality and, in partnership with the Urban Wildlife Institute, wildlife activity onsite. Volunteers participate in both corporate and volunteer workdays at the site.



CREW volunteer Laura Milkert supervises a burn at Kickapoo Woods near Riverside.



A Mars Ambassador volunteer from The Wrigley Company at LaBagh Woods on Chicago's northwest side.

ON THE GROUND PROJECTS

Fish Habitat

Friends and IDNR released 30,000 one year old channel catfish into the Chicago River as the first step in a spawning habitat restoration project. The project, which includes the installation of 400 constructed nesting cavities for channel catfish at eight locations ranging from the North Shore Channel to the Little Calumet River, will help this critical species repopulate the system after years of degradation limited its breeding success. Ten thousand were released at the confluence downtown and 20,000 were released into the Little Calumet River. 70,000 additional channel catfish will be released through the Chicago River system over the next year.



A channel catfish before being released into the Chicago River.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Big Fish Ball

On June 5, 2014, Friends had its most successful Big Fish Ball to date raising over a quarter of a million dollars with a 16% increase in table sponsorship. Many of Chicago's leaders in the civic and corporate communities were among the record 480 guests including Illinois Governor Pat Quinn.

The festivities included elegant outdoor dining outside along the river, Blue Ribbon Awards for excellence in sustainable design, river-inspired performances, and an after-party boat cruise to Ping Tom Memorial Park. The downtown city skyline, Chicago's iconic bridges, and Chicago River views provided a breathtaking backdrop to a spectacular evening along, on and for the river.



Friends' board member Judith Bassoul and a friend enjoy the Big Fish Ball cruise to Ping Tom Park. (Photo credit: Ben Gonzales)



A Big Fish Ball guest meets a wolf which were once common in the region. (Photo credit: Ben Gonzales)

FISCAL YEAR 2014 SUPPORTERS

The board of directors, staff, and volunteers of Friends of the Chicago River are grateful to all the individuals, partners, foundations, and companies who supported our work between July 1, 2013, and June 30, 2014.

Individuals

\$5,000 and above

Judith Bassoul
Craig and Kate Coit
Sally Fletcher
Lawrence and Denise Kaplan
Hank and Wendy Paulson
Gregory and Sarah Van Schaack

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Alphawood Foundation
The Boeing Company
GMR Marketing
Grand Victoria Foundation
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\$30,000 to \$49,999

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Polk Bros. Foundation

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Oberweiler Foundation
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Peoples Gas
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STS Foundation
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Shorenstein Realty Services LP
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Skidmore, Owings & Merrill LLP
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James McHugh Construction Co.
Jocarno Fund
John G. Shedd Aquarium
Lakeshore Foundation, Inc.
Mead Witter Foundation, Inc.
Nuveen Investments
PricewaterhouseCoopers
Roosevelt University
Seadog Ventures
Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meacher &
Flom LLP
Studio Gang Architects
University of Chicago
Weaver Boos Consultants
Wedner Family Foundation
Weglarz Company
William Blair & Company

\$300 to \$999

Bartlett Tree Experts
Cardno ENTRIX
Chicago Grayline Ltd.
Chicago Sightseeing Co.
Dixon Enterprise
Francis W. Parker School
HDR Architecture, Inc
IIT Boeing Scholars Academy
Intrinsic Landscaping, Inc.
Jewish Federation of
Metropolitan Chicago
Lake County Stormwater Management
Commission
The Lakota Group, Inc.
Lawrence's Fisheries
Northern Illinois University Foundation
Public Building Commission of Chicago
Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors
Sims Metal Management Midwest
SPACECO, Inc.

\$25 to \$299

ACE Charitable Foundation
AIA Chicago
Alfred Nobel Elementary School
Aquatic Ecosystems Management, Inc.
Body Dynamics Inc.
Bradburne, Briller, and Johnson
Chiropractic for Life
RR Donnelley
Farr Associates
LaSalle II Magnet Elementary School
Levenfeld Pearlstein; LLC

Microsoft Matching Gifts Program
The Nature Conservancy
Openlands - General Operating
Possibility Place Nursery
Prassas Landscape Studio LLC
River North Residence Association
Site Design Group, Ltd.
Solomon Cordwell Buenz &
Associates, Inc.
Space with Grace Inc.
Trading Technologies International Inc.
Verizon Foundation
Wagstaff Worldwide, Inc.
Wiedner & McAuliffe, Ltd.

Government Agencies

Chi-Cal Rivers Fund
Chicago Botanic Garden
Chicago Park District
Forest Preserves of Cook County
Illinois Department of Natural
Resources, Coastal Management
Program
Illinois EPA, SCALE Program
National Oceanic and Atmospheric
Administration - B-WET
United States EPA, Region 5
Village of Glenview

Endowment Gifts

Kenneth Arenberg and Susanne Swisher
Kent Brown and Jane Jacobsen-Brown
Laurene von Klan and Sarah Kilpatrick
Arthur and Elaine Wong
David M. Wong and Wai-Sinn Chan

The Otter Society

Kenneth Arenberg
John Baird
Judith Bassoul
Joel Oppenheimer, Inc.
Barbara Morse-Quinn and Barry Quinn
Seadog Ventures

In-Kind Donations

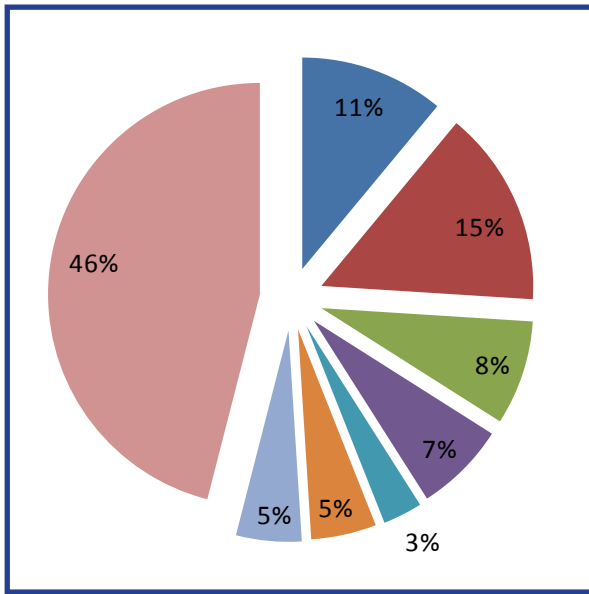
Barnaby's Restaurant
BOOM Entertainment
Chicago Architecture Foundation

Chicago Children's Museum
Chicago Trolley Co. & Chicago
Double Decker Co.
Cicchetti Restuarant
Jeannine Colaco
Crain's Chicago Business
DesignLab Chicago
Dick's Last Resort
East Bank Club
FASTSIGNS
Sally Fletcher
Paul Friedman
Groupon
Hines
Holiday Inn Chicago Mart Plaza
The House Theatre of Chicago
Il Giardino Del Dolce
Kingston Mines
Lowe's
Mendell Street Lofts, LLC
Museum of Contemporary Art
Music Box Theatre
Neoteric Design, Inc.
Public Communications Inc.
Publican Quality Meats
The Redhead Piano Bar
Redmoon Theater
REI
Season 52
John G. Shedd Aquarium
Sheffield's Beer & Wine Garden, Inc.
Shoreline Sightseeing
Southwest Airlines Co.
Phil Stefani Signature Events
Strack & Van Til
Thodos Dance Chicago
Uncommon Ground
Urban Kayaks
Urban Oasis
Victory Gardens Theater
Vornado Realty Trust -
Merchandise Mart
Wacker Bait & Tackle
William and Jayne Walsh
Wendella Sightseeing Company, Inc.

We apologize if any names have
been omitted, misspelled, or otherwise
incorrectly listed. Please contact us
at (312) 939-0490, ext. 10, or
friends@chicagoriver.org so that
we can correct our records.

FISCAL YEAR 2014 FINANCIAL REPORT

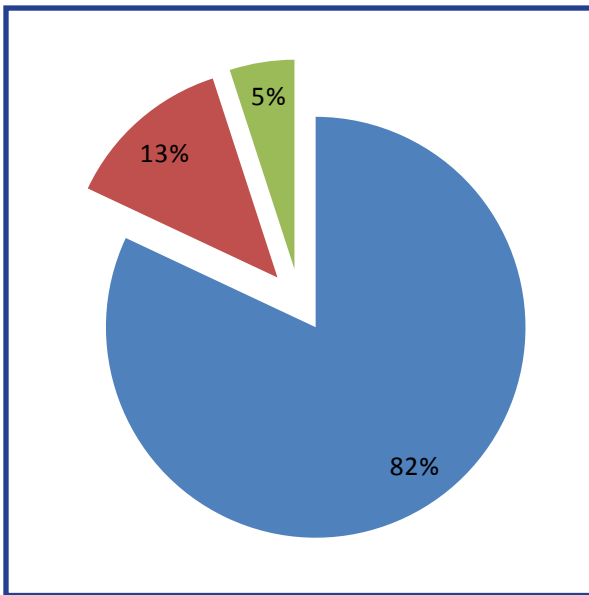
Audited Statements of Revenues and Expenses for the 12 months ending June 30, 2014.



REVENUES

Corporations	11%	\$169,588
Foundations	15%	\$225,763
Individuals	8%	\$118,670
Government	7%	\$101,058
Special Events	3%	\$48,622
Earned Income	5%	\$77,873
In-Kind	5%	\$80,852
Net Assets Released From Restriction	46%	\$695,122

Total **\$1,517,548**



EXPENSES

Program	82%	\$1,196,539
Fundraising & Development	13%	\$197,675
Administration	5%	\$64,159

Total **\$1,458,373**

Net Assets Beginning of the Year **\$705,172**

Change in Assets **\$59,175**

Net Assets at the End of the Year **\$764,347**



A painted turtle, one of our native turtles found in the Chicago River.



The pagoda at Pink Tom Park all lit up to celebrate the Big Fish Ball.

Friends of the Chicago River is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) corporation and is eligible to receive tax-deductible contributions. The governing body of Friends is the board of directors, which sets the organization's policies and procedures, controls its fiscal affairs, manages its assets, and oversees the executive director. The executive director is an *ex officio* member of the board of directors and is the principal executive officer of the organization.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Officers

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Craig Coit
Deputy CFO
Aon Risk Services

Vice President

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Marketing Director
Burke, Warren, MacKay & Serritella, P.C.

Vice President

Karen Alber
Chief Information Officer
MillerCoors

Treasurer

Stacey Hasenbalg
Associate General Counsel and Vice President
BMO Financial Group

Secretary

Jacqueline J. Loewe
Founding Partner
Sheridan Park Consulting

Directors

Judith Bassoul

Kent Brown
Consultant
Kraft Foods (retired)

Kate Chappell
Director of Planned Giving
NorthShore University Health System

Grant Crowley
President
Crowley's Yacht Yard

Sally Fletcher
Vice President
Fletcher Group

Kevin E.A. Hartman
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Google

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Jeffrey Knipmeyer
Partner
Nottage and Ward

David Lowe
Executive Vice President
Leo Burnett USA

James Mark, Jr.
Vice President, Director of Chicago Office
Wight & Company

Barbara Morse-Quinn

David Wong
Vice President
Certare Ventures

John D. Ziesmer
Principal
Arison Young

STAFF

Margaret Frisbie
Executive Director

Kristin Avery
Development Manager

Ozana Balan King
Museum Director and Program Manager,
McCormick Bridgehouse & Chicago
River Museum

Cynthia Fox
Director of Operations

Besty Hands
Director of Outreach and Community
Relations

Mark Hauser
Education Manager

Austin Kellogg
Volunteer and Stewardship Specialist

Madeleine Mahan
Policy and Planning Specialist

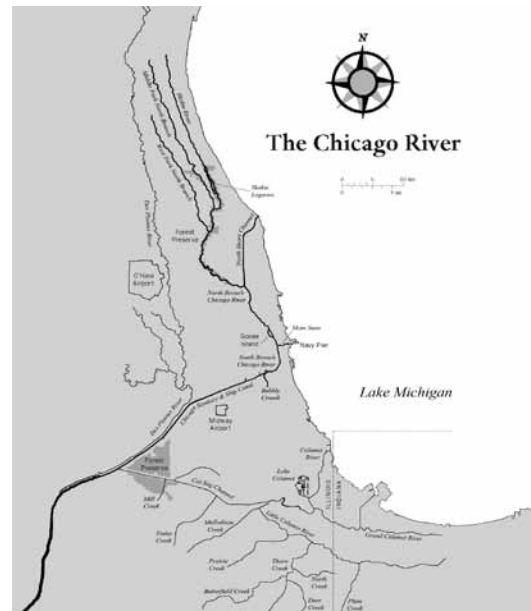
John Quail
Director of Watershed Planning

Archita Singh
Development Assistant

Claire Snyder
Outdoor Education Coordinator

Mary Beth Sova
Director of Development

Seasonal Museum Staff
Matthew D'Agostino
Lori Grove
Tessa Ferraro
Anthony Bronkella



MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Friends of the Chicago River is to improve and protect the Chicago River system for people, plants, and animals. Friends achieves our mission through: education programs that foster awareness, involvement, and a stewardship ethic; public policy and planning efforts that result in systemic river improvements; and on-the-ground projects that physically improve the Chicago River.

ABOUT THE CHICAGO RIVER

Extending from northern Lake to southern Cook County, the 156-mile Chicago River system is an interesting and complex series of waterways, which are inextricably linked to Chicago's history and the development of the region. Flowing through dozens of communities, the river winds its way past forest preserves, parks, industrial zones, and downtown Chicago where it provides a breathtaking natural vista that complements one of the world's most famous skylines.

While the Chicago River was once a prairie stream that flowed towards Lake Michigan, over the last 200 years it has been subject to many human modifications including channelization and flow reversal, yet it still maintains its natural character and is an essential asset to the almost 70 species of fish, 60 species of birds as well as many other species including beavers, muskrats, snapping turtles, occasional river otters, and many more.

Once considered a community detriment, the Chicago River is now a symbol of ingenuity and progress, and is becoming a treasured natural resource that is shared and valued by business leaders, government officials, and the residents of our watershed.

Friends of the Chicago River

411 South Wells Street, Suite 800
Chicago, IL 60607
T: (312) 939-0490
F: (312) 939-0931
www.chicagoriver.org
www.bridgehousemuseum.org