The Blue/Green Connection in Dollars and Design

Incorporating environmentally sensitive design by developing the Chicago River system as a blue/green corridor with natural riverbanks and places for both people and wildlife to thrive would provide an additional economic return on investment in the amount of $1.77 for every $1 spent according to a new report commissioned by Friends of the Chicago River.

A blue/green corridor is a design solution that uses the river, its banks, and adjacent lands to establish an interconnected passageway between natural habitats. Blue/green corridors protect and increase natural areas, provide people a place to play, allow for the natural movement of wildlife, and include open space to absorb and filter rainwater using nature-based approaches.

“The Blue/Green Corridor: Establishing the Intersection Between Economic Growth and Environmental Design,” produced by the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater’s Fiscal and Economic Research Center, found that a people, wildlife, and environment-friendly approach to riverfront development would create an additional $192 million in total economic benefits annually over a 15-year timespan totaling $1.6 billion additional dollars to the local economy. A blue/green corridor effort would support 1,614 jobs annually as well as improve water quality, biodiversity, recreational opportunities, and public health. Such an approach would help mitigate flooding, air and water pollution, and the urban heat island effect.

“In the face of climate change and pressure from urban development, it is essential that a blue/green corridor is established along the Chicago River system,” said Friends’ Executive Director, Margaret Frisbie. “We have an opportunity right now to protect and connect the riverfront to provide quality habitat for wildlife and access for people all along the river’s 156 miles.”

The return on investment study for a blue/green corridor used property values of 123,376 residential properties within 1,500 feet of the Chicago River system.
WADING IN

Zero Tolerance for Sewage, Litter and No Swimming in the River

Friends of the Chicago River has a new call to action. There be must be zero tolerance for sewage, litter, and no swimming in the river. This ambition needs to be a rallying cry because 47 years after the Clean Water Act was signed into law with its very clear goals for clean water that is “fishable and swimmable” across the land locally the notion of it is still oddly novel and generates surprise.

Fortunately, the benefits of choosing to embrace this exalted view are innumerable and efforts to rid the river of litter and sewage and to make it clean enough for swimming are interwoven like a master craftsman makes a tapestry. All the pieces are connected and complement each other.

For example, keeping sewage out of the river requires protecting stormwater and keeping it from going down sewer pipes and overwhelming the system which results in sewage and litter in the river. The best way to manage stormwater is by using nature-based green infrastructure solutions which allow rain to soak into the ground which requires natural open space. That open space provides more public access which increases opportunities for recreation which improves public health and quality of life. These same open space initiatives and green infrastructure practices also increases habitat for native species and includes the removal of invasive plant materials which is harmful to wildlife and can even to contribute to their demise.

At the same, if we layer on the idea of green infrastructure for sewage relief and stormwater management to our blue/green corridor concept (see page 3) we get the same benefits as above and we create connectivity which provides multi-use trails and allows for the natural movement of wildlife. Less stormwater runoff means less litter in the river. And anything that keeps sewage and litter from the river moves us closer to swimming. On top of all that our economic return on investment (see page 1) demonstrates that these choices increase personal wealth and strengthen the economy and make us more resilient—all from working to keep sewage from the river.

Right now we have new opportunity with newly elected officials at every level of government and we ask you to ask them to take up the cry and call for an end to sewage, litter, and no swimming in the river!

Thank you.

Margaret Frisbie
Executive Director
Leaders around the world are starting to understand that sustainable cities are resilient ones. Urban centers as diverse as New Orleans, Montreal, and Singapore are investing in blue/green corridors of land and water for the multiple benefits they deliver.

At their foundation blue/green corridors connect open space, creating places for people to play, wildlife to travel, and land to absorb and filter rainwater. The positive impacts also include social benefits, economic benefits, and a multitude of environmental ones by creating wildlife habitat, reducing combined sewer overflows, and linking important ecosystems.

A sold-out Chicago River Summit that attracted more than 120 people to the downtown offices of McDermott Will & Emery featured experts on the benefits of blue/green corridors and the release of a Friends’ commissioned study that detailed the overall economic impact of such an approach. (See Page 1).

Friends’ Andy Donakowski and Horacio Martinez Michel of the design and consultancy firm Arcadis talked about Friends’ new Public Lands Natural Area Assessment Web Mapping Application that examined almost 150,000 acres of property within a half mile of both sides of the Chicago River system. A third of the parcels are publicly owned and ripe to serve as the framework for a blue/green corridor.

Liza Lehrer of Lincoln Park Zoo’s Urban Wildlife Institute said blue/green corridors help animals thrive by increasing their mobility. Betsy Daub of Friends of the Mississippi River talked about ecologically sound river corridor development in the Twin Cities. And Naureen Rana of the Chicago Park District told of the tremendous successes of the Burnham Wildlife Corridor, a gem on the lakefront from McCormick Place to 47th Street.

“The best economic strategy you can have as a city is to become a place where people want to be,” said Beth White, president and chief executive officer of the Houston Parks Board, which is linking eight bayous with a 150-mile network of parks and trails.

Friends of the Chicago River is pleased to announce the addition of Waste Management Area Vice President Harry Lamberton to Friends’ board of directors.

“Growing up in Washington, D.C., I was able to explore and enjoy the connected paths along Rock Creek and the Potomac River and gained a real appreciation for how those waterways and related greenspace connected the entire city,” he said.

“Today, as a Chicago resident, I am thrilled to have the opportunity as a new board member to contribute to the improvement of the health of the Chicago River and the responsible development of its shore lines.”

Summit participants included, from left to right, Doug Voight, partner, Skidmore Owens & Merrill; Beth White, president and CEO, Houston Parks Board; Margaret Frisbie, executive director, Friends of the Chicago River; Betsy Daub, conservation director, Friends of the Mississippi River; Naureen Rana, project manager, Chicago Park District; Matthew Winden, associate professor, University of Wisconsin-Whitewater Department of Economics; Andy Donakowski, former policy and planning specialist, Friends of the Chicago River.

Harry Lamberton Joins Friends’ Board

Harry Lamberton, area vice president for Waste Management.
Chicago River Student Congress Energizes Young Environmentalists

On March 2, nearly 300 student environmentalists from across the city and suburbs gathered Von Steuben Metro Science Center for the 22nd annual Chicago River Student Congress. The event, organized by Friends of the Chicago River and supported by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, is the annual conference for students participating in Friends’ Chicago River Schools Network (CRSN).

Student-led workshops included environment-related topics such as the problem of plastics in waterways, the dangers of non-native plants and aquatic life, and data on the water quality of the Chicago River. Student displays explained about bird collision prevention, water quality testing, and how to make the Chicago Public Schools system more environmentally sensitive. The young participants represented 30 schools.

The keynote address was given by Ruby Rorty, a University of Chicago student and California native who founded the Santa Cruz Environmental Alliance, an environmental organization that seeks to empower young people as ocean advocates. “We are the generation most impacted by climate change,” she told Congress participants. “It is increasingly important for young people to take the helm on addressing it.”

Students got the opportunity to get face to face with a red-tailed hawk, a barn owl and a kestrel who joined the closing ceremony to further connect the students to our local environment. The visiting raptors were brought to the Congress by Wings and Talons, a nonprofit organization devoted to caring for injured raptors and educating the public about them.

The CRSN provides K-12 teachers the training and personalized assistance they need to immerse their students in the history, evolving ecology, and improving health of the Chicago River. Since CRSN was founded in 1996, it has impacted more than 400,000 students, including leading thousands of field trips to the river where students learn about science and nature by examining what lives in the water.

Educator of the Year: Greta Kringle

Solorio Academy High School chemistry and environmental science teacher Greta Kringle is Friends of the Chicago’s River’s Educator of the Year, accepting the honor at this year’s Chicago River Student Congress. Kringle’s success using the Chicago River system as a teaching tool has not only helped her students learn science but instilled a sense of stewardship for the waterway as well.

“The most important thing I want students to take away from studying environmental science is that we all depend on the health of earth’s natural systems and that we all play a role by existing on this earth in a sustainable way,” said Kringle, who has taught at the Gage Park school since 2013. “I do hope that my students leave class with ideas about creative solutions to environmental issues, a sense of urgency to change some of their own behaviors, and motivation to demand societal change.”
“Generations to come will have to live with the impact of decisions made today,” says Frisbie. “We don’t want them to look back and regret it if we miss our chance.”

In unveiling the study at the Chicago River Summit on March 14, report co-author Matthew Winden, Ph.D., associate professor of economics at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, said that when it comes to development, “If you don’t put dollar values on environmental resources, society will, unfortunately, value them at zero.”

“The blue/green corridor approach improves things ecologically but hopefully we can start to understand that that same type of approach to development doesn’t have to come at the cost of the economy. You can actually experience great economic development and economic growth by investing in what is the right thing,” Winden said. “You’re going to experience property value increases that ultimately translate into additional spending in the economy and that has a big impact.”

Researchers examined the assessed valuations of more than 123,000 properties along the Chicago River system in Cook County and applied a formula based on previous studies that looked at how using natural green infrastructure affected home values. These types of environmental efforts lead to an increase in residential property values of around five percent over 15 years, the study concludes.

Such blue/green corridor approaches have shown to have great economic value in cities such as Houston, San Antonio, Washington, D.C., Cleveland and Pittsburgh.

The blue/green river corridor study can be downloaded at http://bit.ly/bluegreenROI.

“Generations to come will have to live with the impact of decisions made today,” says Frisbie. “We don’t want them to look back and regret it if we miss our chance.”

A Friends of Chicago River-commissioned study on the economic benefits of a blue/green corridor attracted a good deal of media attention. “With the Chicago Riverwalk booming and interest in natural waterways blossoming throughout the Chicago area, the report aims to underscore the potential impact that could come from revitalizing the network of rivers, streams and channels,” the Chicago Tribune said of the study’s release.

Other coverage included reports on WBBM Newsradio, WTTW, Living Architecture, and Korea Daily.
You are invited to Friends of the Chicago River’s
27th Annual Chicago River Day

#ChiRiverDay2019

Saturday, May 11, 2019
9 a.m. to 12 noon

Friends wants to thank our sponsors for making the 2019 Chicago River Day possible:

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Ruby meadowhawk dragonfly

Sympetrum rubicundulum

Illustration by Jen Pagnini

www.mooloco.com

Sign up TODAY to celebrate a cleaner river.

Sign up TODAY to volunteer, to care for our local waterway and spruce it up for spring.

For a list of sites or to volunteer, please visit http://bit.ly/chicagoriverday.
Since 1992, Friends has organized Chicago River Day, our volunteer work day, to celebrate and care for the Chicago River system. This important river is the heart of our communities. It provides critical habitat for all kinds of wildlife including fish, mink, turtles, birds and butterflies while also serving as a recreational resource for the people who live here or visit.

Though there's been great progress made in improving the health of the river, it still needs our help. Be a friend of the river and volunteer with us to #LosetheLitter that fouls the water, its banks, and adjacent lands. Litter is not only an eyesore, it is dangerous to wildlife. Animals are unable to digest small pieces of plastic they mistakenly eat. They can become trapped in plastic and even die.

To be a part of critical effort, sign up at one of over 60 locations to pick up litter and improve river-species habitat. Look for on-the-water sites on the Chicago River Day map if you’d like to help out from a canoe or kayak. All volunteers receive a free Chicago River Day T-shirt depicting the Ruby meadowhawk dragonfly.

This year Friends is celebrating our 40th anniversary by highlighting the Ruby meadowhawk dragonfly (See Page 13). This insect was chosen because dragonflies are good indicators of water quality and the ruby is the 40th anniversary gem stone.


Friends Press Stormwater Issues in D.C.

Friends’ Executive Director Margaret Frisbie joined the Healing Our Waters Coalition in March for Great Lakes Days when she and environmental leaders from across 10 states met with federal lawmakers, including Sen. Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), in Washington, D.C.

The visit sought to protect funds for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, to request an increase in federally backed state revolving funds to improve sewage, stormwater, and drinking water infrastructure, to uphold the Clean Water Act, and stop Asian carp. Duckworth and Sen. Dick Durbin (D-IL) had several priorities included in the America’s Water Infrastructure Act of 2018, including developing ways to combat stormwater runoff and prevent flooding.

Sen. Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) welcomed environmental groups to Washington, D.C., including Friends of the Chicago River.

Centennial Volunteers

Progress in the Preserves meetings were held in Blue Island and Glenview to celebrate the successes of Centennial Volunteers, a partnership between Friends of the Chicago River, the Forest Preserves of Cook County, Friends of the Forest Preserves, the Field Museum and the Chicago Ornithological Society.

Volunteer activities improve habitat and biodiversity by removing invasive vegetation, collecting native seeds, wildlife monitoring projects, and burning brush piles. “Volunteers are a very effective and powerful force,” Forest Preserves of Cook County ecologist Chip O’Leary told those gathered at the Blue Island Historical Society.

To learn more, please visit http://bit.ly/CentennialVolunteer.

Two Centennial Volunteer meetings drew interested folks to Blue Island and Glenview.
Friends at 40: Forty People

It would be impossible to include all of the extraordinary individuals who have played a role in the extraordinary recovery of the Chicago River system and Friends’ growth since our founding in 1979. Volunteers, staff, board members, community members, business leaders, mayors, congressmen, senators and even presidents have contributed their passion, talent, resources, and expertise. These 40 are among those multitudes which also very likely includes you.

| 1. Joanne Alter: The first woman to win a county-wide seat when she was elected to serve as an MWRD commissioner in 1972. Alter brought that same passion and leadership to Friends as one of our founding members on Friends’ inaugural steering committee. Alter was committed to ridding the river of sewage. |
| 2. Fred Axley: Axley was a member of Friends’ board of directors from 1998 until he passed away in 2013 and provided invaluable non-profit experience and enormous knowledge of how organizations succeed and fail. He was a member, volunteer, board president, and served on the finance, board governance, planning, and bridgehouse development committees and as a water quality advocate representing Friends with Illinois EPA and local elected officials. |
| 3. Geoffrey Baer: In addition to bringing the Chicago River into everybody’s living room in 1995 with his WTTW series “Chicago by Boat,” Baer has served as a Chicago River Summit speaker and moderator, and a member of Friends’ Halloween Boat Float committee. A regular volunteer for Chicago River Day, he brought his children in 2017 when Friends’ efforts became a highlight of his updated The Chicago River Tour. |
| 4. Mike Borgstrom: The president of Wendella Sightseeing Company, Borgstrom has been working with Friends since 1991. Active in reducing the risk from aquatic invasive species and a founding member of the Harbor Safety Committee, he is a member of Friends’ Bridgehouse Committee and has provided Friends ongoing access to his fleet enabling us to entertain members, stakeholders, and elected officials, and raise operating support. |
| 5. Cathy Breitenbach: A member of Friends’ Planning Committee, Breitenbach joined Friends in 1997, managing several initiatives including Friends’ burgeoning Urban Canoe Adventures program until 2001. Since then she has continued to have a profound effect on improving the health of the river and access to it as river liaison in Mayor Richard M. Daley’s office and in her present position as director of natural and cultural resources for the Chicago Park District. |
| 6. Marjorie Brownstein: A part of the planning team that explored the use and potential for Friends’ McCormick Bridgehouse & Chicago River Museum, Brownstein is a founding member of Friends’ Bridgehouse Committee and co-chair of the Bridgehouse Summer Cruise. Brownstein has used her professional talents and creative energy to establish the Bridgehouse as one of Friends’ broadest reaching programs. |
| 7. Jane Byrne: The first Chicago mayor to take consequential action to protect the Chicago River, Byrne appeared at Friends’ first conference in 1980 and endorsed our plan to “restore and rejuvenate” the lands that border the river. With her support Friends and the Chicago Department of Planning and Development created the first protective river ordinance, approved in 1983. |
| 8. Robert Cassidy: In August 1979, urban planner Cassidy triggered Friends’ creation with his Chicago magazine cover story, “Our Friendless River,” which decried the state of the Chicago River and laid out an action plan to address it. His appeal and actionable agenda attracted attention from civic leaders and community members. Cassidy was Friends’ first chair. |
| 9. Grant Crowley: A constant source of information and expertise, Crowley has been helping Friends succeed since before he joined the board of directors in 1992. The |
president of Crowley's Yacht Yard, he is active in ensuring people of all ages are on the water through a multitude of community outreach programs.

10. Richard M. Daley: Under Daley's administration as mayor, the City updated the Chicago River Corridor Design Guidelines, added a requirement for a 30-foot setback for public access, published the Chicago River Agenda that set lofty benchmarks for water quality, and secured an Act of Congress to create the Chicago Riverwalk, building the first plazas and underbridge connections.

11. Dick Durbin: As a U.S. senator, Durbin has been a terrific advocate for clean water and green infrastructure assuring the river’s improvement. In addition to attaining funds to complete the Tunnel and Reservoir Plan, Durbin was a vocal advocate who in 2011 hosted a summit and river tour to advance protections of the river as a recreational resource and sewage effluent disinfection.

12. Albert Ettinger: With decades of experience enforcing and defending the Clean Water Act, environmental attorney Albert Ettinger has played a critical role in improving the health of the Chicago River system. His knowledge and expertise have resulted in increased water quality standards to protect people and aquatic life, more stringent phosphorus limits, and a sunset for the construction of the Tunnel and Reservoir Plan.

13. Rahm Emanuel: As a mayoral candidate, Emanuel embraced sewage effluent disinfection. Under his direction as mayor, the City completed the Chicago Riverwalk exposing millions of more people to the water and built new boat houses, trails, and underbridge and over river connections not only downtown. He established the Chicago River Ecology and Governance Group to institutionalize ecologically sensitive riverbank improvement and protection.

14. Jim Filippini: Decades of experience in the water division at USEPA made Filippini a knowledgeable water resource expert for Friends and expanded Friends' technical understanding and advancement of water quality issues. Filippini served on Friends' technical advisory committee, Action Plan for the Chicago River charrette team, and worked to reduce combines sewer overflows.

15. Gene Fleming: The chief of the environmental formulation and analysis section of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Fleming ensures ecosystem restoration projects happen along the Chicago River. Under his guidance, over 114 acres of riverbank and adjacent lands at Homer, Legion, River, and Ronan parks have been restored; the North Branch Dam was removed at River Park; and a 40 acre instream and riverbank restoration is planned for Bubbly Creek.

16. Bill Frederickson: The founder of the North River Commission in 1962, Frederickson was an influential community voice who served as a member of Friends’ original steering committee and was at the first meeting that launched Friends.

17. Ralph Frese: Blacksmith, canoe maker, conservationist and proprietor of the Chicagoland Canoe Base, Frese, is directly responsible for ensuring that tens of thousands of people paddled Chicago-area rivers, including Robert Cassidy who was with Frese on the journey that resulted in “Our Friendless River” and the creation of Friends in 1979. Frese rented canoes to Friends enabling our early paddling endeavors.

18. Wink Hastings: In 1992 Hastings began as the National Park Service project coordinator for the Chicago Rivers Demonstration Project working closely with Friends, and regional and federal agencies to assess the condition of the Chicago River system and involve citizens and communities in developing and implementing restoration projects. His efforts resulted in the restoration of Gompers Park in Chicago and the Prairie Wolf Slough Wetlands Demonstration project in Deerfield.

19. David Jones: The heart and soul of Friends for many years, Jones was an urban planner; Friends’ volunteer, board, and staff member; and faculty at Northeastern Illinois University. Jones was one of the first people to call Robert Cassidy; was Friends’ second chair; and used his planning knowledge, artistic ability, community organizing, warm nature and genuine passion to advance Friends’ goals from 1979 until he passed away in 2015.
20. Tom Judge: Judge was a one of the more than 100 people who in 1979 attended the first official meeting of what became Friends. Active ever since, he has been a volunteer canoe guide for over 20 years and volunteered at almost every Friends’ event. Judge is a master at putting new paddlers at ease and bringing the river to life through history and humor.

21. Pete Leki: A river advocate since 1994, Leki is a founding member of the Riverbank Neighbors community centered around riverbank restoration in the North Center neighborhood. Leki has been a Friends’ member for over 25 years and has led thousands of students on Chicago River School Network field trips, is a site steward for LaBagh Woods Sauganash Prairie, and leads the Waters School Garden project.

22. Josina Morita: An urban planner and MWRD commissioner, Morita’s energy and enthusiasm made it possible for us to jointly launch the Big Jump, an in-the-water demonstration event that showcases water quality improvements and a future of swimming in the river. Morita convinced a host of elected officials from all levels of government to swim in the river for the Big Jump as well.

23. Chris Parson: Parson was hired as Friends’ education manager in 1997 to design an education program to teach students about the value and health of the Chicago River system. After a national survey, he developed the Chicago River Schools Network which has impacted 400,000 students since. Upon retirement in 2003, Parson continued to volunteer on field trips, joined Friends’ volunteer-driven canoe program, and participates in many Friends’ events.

24. Pat Parsons: A retired Chicago Public School teacher, Parsons was responsible for thousands of students learning about science, nature, and the river through Friends’ Chicago River Schools Network. Friends’ 2003 Educator of the Year, Parsons’ enabled her Gage Park High School students to go on river field trips to research water quality, assist in river-bank restoration, lecture at the Chicago River Student Congress, volunteer on Chicago River Day, and tutor middle school children.

25. Janet Pellegrini: An environmental scientist for USEPA Region 5, Pellegrini impacted aquatic life standards for the Chicago River system by urging a government alliance to catalog dead fish collected as part of a maintenance operation at the O’Brien Lock on the Calumet River. The data revealed that native fish reproduction was occurring and there was a greater abundancy of fish species and fish.

26. Steve Pescitelli: Dating back to at least 1998, Pescitelli, an Illinois Department of Natural Resources aquatic biologist, has been helping Friends make the river a better place for fish. Pescitelli has worked with us to identify dams that needed to be removed, design and install channel catfish nesting cavities, implement a plan to remove the barriers to fish in Mill Creek, and install native plants in the North Shore Channel.

27. Mike Quigley: Quigley, the U.S. Representative from the 5th District, has been working to improve the Chicago River system for over 20 years. In addition to championing environmental issues in Washington and as a member of the Cook County Board, he has been a volunteer and volunteer site captain for Chicago River Day, spoken at the Chicago River Summit, pushed to upgrade water quality standards to protect people, and took the plunge in the inaugural Big Jump.

28. Pat Quinn: The former Illinois governor began his work with Friends in 2002 as chair of the Illinois River Coordinating Council and co-hosted the first Chicago River Summit intended to unite the public behind the river’s care. Quinn joined us to advocate for dam removal and launched the Illinois Dam Removal Initiative which allocated nearly $10 million to remove 12 dams locally including four impeding the Chicago River.

29. Bob Rung: Rung was a part of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources stream biology team whose work helped improve the ecosystems of the Chicago River system and many other rivers and streams throughout the state. His pioneering and successful efforts to establish native water willow and lizard’s tail communities in the Fox River led Friends to replicate it in the North Shore Channel.

30. Eugene Schulter: From the day in 1983 when former 47th Ward Alderman Schulter helped Friends secure the first Chicago ordinance to protect the Chicago River to the day he led the charge to pass a resolution in support of sewage effluent disinfection in 2011, he was a friend.
The first public canoe launch in Chicago opened in Schulter’s ward at Clark Park and he supported Friends’ launch of the Flatwater Classic, the first canoe and kayak race on the Chicago River.

31. Debra Shore: An MWRD commissioner and outdoor enthusiast who champions clean water and public access, Shore has been working to improve natural lands adjacent to the river system since 1982 as a member of the North Branch Restoration Project and in her role as founding editor of Chicago Wilderness magazine and founding director of Friends of the Forest Preserves.

32. Cindy Skrukrud, Ph.D.: The clean water program director for the Illinois Chapter of the Sierra Club, Skrukrud has provided a deep knowledge of regional water issues combined with a high level of scientific expertise to better protect water quality for the Chicago River system. She’s contributed to improved recreational and aquatic life water quality standards and wastewater treatment, and reductions stormwater and nutrient pollution.

33. David M. Solzman: Not enough can be said about the impact that Solzman, a professor, photographer, and author of The Chicago River, had on Friends of the Chicago River from when he joined the board in 1992 until he passed away in 2018. His influential 1998 book about the Chicago River system provided Friends’ staff, scholars, and arm chair adventurers an opportunity to “see” the river. His dedicated service as a subject matter expert and technical advisory committee chair was invaluable.

34. Jerry Sterling: In 1988 Sterling became the first president of the board of directors after assisting Friends incorporate into an independent 501(c)3 organization. With great passion and aplomb, in the first year Sterling helped the organization increase its membership to 400 people, increase giving by 250%, and establish focus on policy and planning and on public outreach, which remain core to our mission.

35. Judith Stockdale: Then executive director of Openlands Stockdale was among the first to call Robert Cassidy and ask how to support his plan to revitalize the river. Stockdale joined as a steering committee member and helped organized Friends into a program of Openlands so that Friends could raise money for projects and staff. Assisted by her guidance and support, the organization flourished and in 1988 spun off into its own 501(c)3.

36. Ping Tom: Tom, a Chicago businessman and civic leader who passed away in 1995, was the leading force for new public open space for his community when the Chicago Park District acquired 12 acres along the South Branch on a former railroad site. The park was named for Tom and marries Chinese design with natural plantings, a boat house, boat dock, canoe and kayak rentals.

37. Laurene von Klan: Friends’ second executive director, von Klan served from 1992 until 2005 and initiated several of Friends’ most noteworthy programs and drove the development of several influential policy reports that fueled decades of improvement to the river’s health. Waterways for Our Future, released in 2000 led directly to a change in water quality standards to protect for swimming.

38. Patty Werner: Planning supervisor for Lake County Stormwater Management Commission from 1996 until 2017, Werner was one of the founders of the North Branch Planning Committee. Werner wrote the original North Branch Watershed Plan, advocated for stormwater and open space protections in the Chicago River’s headwaters, and contributed to over 50 on-the-ground projects that improve water quality, public access, and wildlife habitat.

39. Beth White: Friends’ first executive director from 1988 until 1992, White started as an employee of Openlands and transitioned Friends from a “program” into a full-fledged 501(c)3. Under her leadership Friends mobilized the community, laid the foundation for the continuous Chicago River Trail, and led the planning process that resulted in the first Chicago River Urban Design Guidelines in 1990 which influence river planning today.

40. Ed Zotti: A founding member of Friends of the Chicago River, Zotti served on the board of directors as secretary/treasurer and Friends’ technical advisory committee, was the editor for Friends’ newsletter, and was instrumental in developing the City of Chicago’s Chicago River Urban Design Guidelines. Zotti has been an important member of Friends’ Planning Committee.
Crooked Creek Project Boosts
Water Quality and Wildlife Habitat

Nearly 81 acres have been cleared of invasive species around Cooked Creek near south suburban Palos Hills through Friends’ land restoration work with the Forest Preserves of Cook County. That tally includes 29 acres of black locust trees which can dominate prairies, harming native grasses and other vegetation required by wildlife.

Once the land is opened up, native grasses and forbs suppressed by invasive species are expected to naturally recover as higher light levels return. This new native ground layer vegetation will also slow water flow on the surface and increase water infiltration, leading to improved water quality entering Crooked Creek and an overall improved Cal-Sag Channel.

In conjunction with this work, funded through a grant by the Chi-Cal Rivers Fund, the Forest Preserves of Cook County have cleared 126 acres, resulting in 207 total acres restored along Crooked Creek.

Woodland birds, such as redheaded woodpeckers, and bats need open woodland and savanna to swoop for prey, and will occupy areas cleared of invasive shrubs.

Turtles are able to find nest locations much easier in open areas than those closed in with invasive brush.

Cleaner water will support more macroinvertebrates in the creek and aid the endangered Hine’s emerald dragonflies. A diversity of native flowering plants will support a host of pollinators and fruiting shrubs and grasses will support migratory birds.

North Suburban Effort Aims for Better Branches

Friends has been working closely as an associate member of the North Branch Chicago River Watershed Workgroup focusing on water quality in three subwatersheds: West Fork, Middle Fork, and Skokie River from Waukegan to Morton Grove. Twenty-five monitoring sites have been designated and 11 have been sampled for fish, wildlife habitat, sediment and macroinvertebrates.

The goals of the North Branch Chicago River Watershed Workgroup are to create a data base for the watershed, develop a chloride and nutrient reduction strategy, identify pollution issues, and update the 2008 North Branch Chicago River Watershed-Based Plan.

“This effort affects the entire Chicago River system because these are the headwaters,” said Friends’ director of policy and conservation, John Quail. “Understanding the waterway in a holistic way will produce positive and wide-ranging results.” The workgroup includes 27 partner organizations including 17 municipalities as well as divisions from Lake and Cook county government.
Later this summer be on the lookout for one of Chicago’s most voracious predators, the Ruby meadowhawk dragonfly.

They start their life in ephemeral ponds and other spring season backwaters. Larvae have huge jaws and are voracious predators, eating aquatic insects, zooplankton, amphipods, and other small creatures, and even the occasional small fish. Adults emerge in late June to early September.

The symbol for Friends’ 40th anniversary celebration, the ruby meadowhawk is an important indicator of improving water quality because it spends its first life phases under water as egg then larva and its adult stage hunting from above.

The ruby meadowhawk is a smaller-than-average sized dragonfly with a body length of only 1.3 inches. They are in the family of skimmer dragonflies, meaning they hunt other flying insects while skimming the surface of the water. They are strong fliers and are able to move each of their four wings independently. Compared to a mosquito, meadowhawks combine the speed of a jet plane with the maneuverability of a helicopter.

The ruby meadowhawk is distinguished by a yellow-brown face, brown to dark-red abdomen with black lateral stripes, black legs and dark wing veins. Adult females have a yellow-brown appearance, while males have bright red markings and can be difficult to distinguish from the cherry-faced meadowhawk.

Ruby meadowhawks are found from the northern Great Plains to the Atlantic. They prefer temporary ponds and marshes and are found occasionally at larger lakes and slow-moving rivers.

The season to observe these fascinating creatures is coming. In a few short months be on the lookout for an emerging larva or get out your binoculars and scan the waters for a flash of red.

**SOUTH BRANCH IDEAS FLOATED**

In partnership with the Friends of the Chicago River, Active Transportation Alliance, Cannon Design, and Metropolitan Planning Council, in December the South Branch Park Advisory Council and SmithGroup released “A Framework Plan for South Branch Parks” to share the community vision for three of the parks along the South Branch including the Eleanor Street Boathouse Park and #571, Canal Origins Park, and Canalport Riverwalk. With ideas for trails and greater public access, the group is striving to use the project as a community connector. More at http://bit.ly/PlanSBPAC.

**NEW PLANS FOR SKOKIE BOATHOUSE**

The Village of Winnetka and the Forest Preserves of Cook County have produced plans for a new boathouse on the Skokie Lagoons near Tower Road. The plan includes a new building housing canoe and kayak rentals, spaces for indoor and outdoor education programs, and public bathrooms. Native plant landscaping improvements as well as ADA compliant parking and boating access are also included in the plan, estimated to cost about $1 million. Additional funding is being sought.

**CHICAGO RIVER BOOK REVISED**

A revised edition of *The Chicago River: A Natural and Unnatural History* has been published by Southern Illinois University Press. Author Libby Hill said the purpose of the updated and expanded edition is to “help readers be informed champions on the river’s behalf.” The *Chicago Tribune* says it is “written with scholarly substance but aimed directly a general reader.” The book is available at http://bit.ly/SIUPress.
THE OTTER SOCIETY

The Otter Society is Friends’ giving society and recognizes individuals, businesses, and foundations that contribute $1,500 annually to the General Operating Fund or the Voice for the River Endowment Fund. Chicago River Legacy members, who are thoughtfully providing for Friends in their estate plans, are also recognized as Otter Society members.

Vince and Sally Anderson
Anonymous
Kenneth Arenberg and Susanne Swisher
Atrium Landscapes
Cinda Axley
Judith Bassoul
Alvin H. Baum Family Fund
Kent Brown and Jane Jacobsen-Brown
Craig and Kate Colt
Grant Crowley
Carolyn Eleanore Damon Family Foundation
Philip Enquist and Joanna Karatzas Entertainment Cruises
Albert Ettinger and Susan Lannin Euromonitor International, Inc.
Sally Fletcher
Margaret Frisbie
David Wong

INDIVIDUALS

$5,000 and above
Judith Bassoul
Craig and Kate Colt
Albert Ettinger and Susan Lannin
Larry and Denise Kaplan
Lydia and Stephen Kelley
Harry and Meredith Lambert
Hank and Wendy Paulson/Bobolink Foundation

$2,500 to $4,999
Kenneth Arenberg and Susanne Swisher
Kent Brown and Jane Jacobsen-Brown
Grant Crowley
Sally Fletcher
Daniel Kilduff and Ellen Fryda
Sven and Julie Sykes
Victor and Barbara Zaveduk

$1,000 to $2,499
Vince and Sally Anderson
Cinda Axley
Marjorie Brownstein
Philip Enquist and Joanna Karatzas
James Fuller
Norm Goldring
Paul and Kerri Hagy
Tom and Barbara Honn
Eugene and Sasha Jarvis
Charitable Gift Fund

INDIVIDUALS

$500 to $999
Geoffrey Baer and Amelia Kohm
Henry and Lele Barkhausen
Louise Barrett
Jeny and Margaret Berg
Brian and Mary Faith Cook
Molly Day and John Himmelfarb
Robert and Quinn Delaney
Ryan Granholm
Clare Halpin
James and Carol Hansen
The Honorable Brian Hopkins
Debbie and David Hrobon
Rebecca Jasso
Kim Olsen-Clark and Ian Clark
Herbert Schepel and Kathleen Deane
Wendy Schiller-Jones and Thomas M. Jones
Glen and Barbara Shelly
The Honorable Debra Shore
Timothy VanTassel
Jim Weil

$250 to $499
Richard and Andrea Amend
Sabrina Bainbridge
John and Toni Burt
Evelyn Clifford
Edward DeYoung
Margaret Frisbie and Matt Binns
Nancy L. Gajewski
John Gilardi
Colleen P. Grafton
Kathy and Jim Gysler
Molly Day and John Himmelfarb

FOUNDERs, CORPORATIONS, AND OTHERS

$10,000 and above
Alphawood Foundation
Aon
Carolyn Eleanore Damon Family Foundation
Heartland Housing
Sterling Bay
Mars Wrigley Foundation

$3,500 to $9,999
CBC
Elite Staffing
Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation
Kirkland & Ellis LLP
Lakeside Bank
National Environmental Education Foundation

GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Friends of the Forest Preserves
Chi-Cal Rivers Fund, a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
Lake County Stormwater Management Commission
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

Continued on page 15
Spring/Summer Calendar of Events

Earth Day Cruise
April 22
Contact @jdill@chicagoriver.org

Chicago River Day
May 11, 9 a.m. to noon
You can register for this event at
(See page 6).

McCormick Bridgehouse &
Chicago River Museum Opening
May 18, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Free admission only on opening day.

Canoe and Cleans on the
North Branch
Various dates
Contact aanderson@chicagoriver.org

Big Fish Ball
June 11, 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
The Westin Chicago River North,
followed by a Shoreline Sightseeing
After Party Cruise from
9 p.m. to 10 p.m.

Summer Cruise
June 26
Come enjoy this benefit for the
Friends’ Bridgehouse Museum
Contact jcoles@chicagoriver.org

The Big Jump & Chicago River
Festival
September 7
Ping Tom Park
Contact jdill@chicagoriver.org

IN-KIND
Chicago Architecture Center
Chicago Shakespeare Theater
East Bank Club
Epic Burger
Fitness Formula Club, Union Station
David K. Jones
Kendra Scott
Lush Cosmetics
Metropolis Coffee Company
Metropolitan Water Reclamation
District of Greater Chicago
Chris and Nan Parson
Patagonia, Lincoln Park
William and Jayne Walsh
Wateriders Chicago River Kayak
Tours and Rentals

Friends of the Chicago River
is a proud member of

EarthShare

Chicago Wilderness
A Regional Nature Reserve

...YES! I want to support the Chicago River’s recovery and renaissance!

By becoming a member, you are making a strong statement that you want a healthier river for people, plants, and animals. Gift memberships are also available.

$1,500+ The Otter Society
$1,000 Wild Mink
$500 Great Horned Owl
$250 Yellow-headed Blackbird
$156 Black-crowned Night Heron
$156 Tributary Member (Emerging Leaders)

Your generous support directly impacts Friends’ efforts to improve the Chicago River’s health and vitality in three important areas: education and outreach; on-the-ground projects; and public policy and planning.

Members receive:
• Free general admission plus discounts on bridge lift, tour tickets, and merchandise at our McCormick Bridgehouse & Chicago River Museum,
• Discounts on our canoe trips,
• A subscription to The River Reporter newsletter,
• Volunteer bulletins, email alerts, and other opportunities for hands-on involvement, plus
• Invitations to special events such as Chicago River Day, Big Fish Ball, and Summer Cruise, and
• Listing in Friends’ Annual Report.

Otter Society members represent Friends’ most important philanthropic partnership. In appreciation of their generous support, they enjoy unique benefits at three levels of giving. To learn more about how you can participate as an individual, household, or business, please contact kolsenclarke@chicagoriver.org or call (312) 939-0490, ext. 19.

Interested in joining our monthly giving club?
Support Friends year-round through automatic monthly contributions as small as $10 per month. Contact membership at friends@chicagoriver.org or call (312) 939-0490, ext. 10.

Friends of the Chicago River is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization. Please send this form and payment to: Friends of the Chicago River at 411 South Wells Street, Suite 800, Chicago, IL 60607, or join online at www.chicagoriver.org/get-involved/membership.

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Save These Dates to Have Some Fun With Friends

Big Fish Ball: Tuesday, June 11, 2019

Join us for our 14th annual Big Fish Ball, Friends’ signature fundraising event in support of our mission to improve and protect the Chicago River system for people, plants and animals.

This year’s fun, colorful, summer party on the will be at the Westin Chicago River North, 320 N. Dearborn St., Chicago, from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. The event includes the opportunity to engage with amazing river wildlife, sip some delicious cocktails, enjoy a three-course dinner plus a chance to win incredible raffle packages and bid on silent auction and live auction prizes.

A magical river cruise, available for an additional fee, will cap off this memorable evening. Tickets are on sale now at http://bit.ly/BigFishBall2019. For sponsorship opportunities, table purchases and raffle donations, please contact Kim Olsen-Clark at kolsenclark@chicagoriver.org.

Chicago River Day: Saturday, May 11, 2019

See Pages 6-7 for more information.