

the river REPORTER

Making the North Shore Channel Litter Free

Despite the increase in attention and appreciation bestowed upon the Chicago River system in recent years, a lot of garbage remains in and along the river. Aesthetically disturbing and damaging to the river's reputation, litter also causes real harm to the system, injuring and poisoning animals and smothering and stunting plants.

You Can Help Friends to Clean the Canal

Friends invites anyone interested in helping make the North Shore Channel litter free to contact Joanne So Young Dill at (312) 939-0490, ext. 23.

Please visit Friends' website (www.chicagoriver.org) and Facebook page for upcoming opportunities to be a friend to the North Shore Channel.

To address the issue on a year-round basis, Friends is advocating for more on-the-water litter collection and launching a new initiative to make the North Shore Channel litter free. This project, called "Clean the Canal," is part of the Wildlife Restoration and Conservation Project funded by the Wrigley Company Foundation and intends to build support to help keep the North Shore Channel free from litter.

Friends chose the North Shore Channel for the Clean the Canal project because unlike many of the other reaches of the river, it has a fairly discrete number of possible litter sources and active communities along its banks.

Already Friends has identified over 25 potential partners with whom we are working to recruit in the effort. Activities will include building community awareness, developing service learning projects, holding work days, providing tools, celebrating



Dammrich Rowing Center in Skokie along the North Shore Channel.

the 25th annual Chicago River Day and developing a long term partnership platform.

The Clean the Canal project complements Friends' other efforts on the channel, including installing channel catfish nesting cavities and planting new emergent plants to increase and improve habitat starting next June.

See page eleven for membership opportunities.

or visit our website, www.chicagoriver.org for more information on getting involved.



Is Blue Worse than Green?

When it was announced that the river might be dyed blue to celebrate a Cubs' win in the World Series, I felt a shadow creep over the immense sense of victory I'd been sharing with many Chicagoans and Cubs fans. For over 37 years, Friends has been working to improve not only the health of the river system, but also peoples' perceptions of it. I knew dyeing it blue was not going to help.

When Friends was founded in 1979, billions of gallons of sewage were being released into the river annually. There was no Deep Tunnel, no giant reservoirs, and barely any fish. The river was inaccessible, fenced off and polluted, a forgotten back alleyway full of trash. Dyeing the river green on St. Patrick's Day, a civic tradition considered to be festive and fun, was not, by any measure, the worst thing happening to the river at the time. In fact, it was not even close.

Instead of concentrating on such marginalizing pursuits, Friends' founders and those who came after chose to address systemic issues while striving to prove that this once industrial waterway had value and deserved to be cleaned up. We worked

hard to educate people about what was possible, issued reports that showed what needed to be done, demonstrated how we might do it, and built a network of supporters for a healthy river that was clean, accessible, and would be treasured and cared for by the people who live here and the public agencies that hold our collective trust to protect our waterways.

In just the past couple of years there have been extraordinary improvements throughout the Chicago River system, like the Chicago Riverwalk, sewage effluent disinfection, habitat restoration and dam removal—all of these demonstrate the new value placed upon the river. People are excited about the Chicago River system and they are taking advantage of it recreationally, residentially, and as a key component to energizing and sustaining a growing, healthy economy.

Despite this new reality, though, we are still faced with serious problems that require serious solutions—like frequent combined sewer overflows, runoff pollution, and the fact that too many people have

Story continued on page 3...

STAFF & BOARD

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Our mission is to improve and protect the Chicago River system for people, plants, and animals.

Our vision is to make the Chicago River one of the world's greatest metropolitan rivers.

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WADING IN

...Continued from page 2.

outdated misconceptions about the river's condition and still see the industrialized, polluted, virtually dead river of the past. Allowing and encouraging dyeing the river reinforces their misconceptions.

When the Cubs won (yay!) and the river was dyed blue without a permit or any review, in clear violation of the Clean Water Act, we set a dangerous precedent that anything goes. Bulls win – red. Sox win – black. Veteran's Day – it could go red, white and blue. It is all just for fun, right?

This new normal is bad enough, but the bigger and more important point is that we shouldn't be dyeing it at all. This river has been abused for decades. It was widened, dredged, straightened, and reversed. We killed almost everything that lived in it, but it is all starting to come back. Our river is a living, flowing natural resource that is home to fish, beavers, muskrats, turtles, herons, osprey, eagles, and tiny little creatures under the water that are essential to sustain them all.

It is time we treat the river with respect.

Margaret Frisbie
Executive Director

Making Progress for Wildlife

Friends is making great progress on our wildlife habitat projects, with over 40 acres cleared for turtle nesting and four osprey nests and four bat maternity colonies installed. As the ground freezes in December, our turtle-focused restoration work will resume, and we expect to have cleared a total of 78 acres at five river-edge forest preserves by June in addition to adding two more bat colonies and one more osprey nest—among other activities. The goal is to increase the reproductive success of all of these species.



Friends' staff distributed native seeds at our eight-acre Skokie Lagoons location in support of REI's #OptOutside movement.

Diving In: March 9, 2017 Save the Date for the Chicago River Summit

One of Friends' primary goals is to make the river healthy enough for people to swim in again. This ambition inspired the theme of the 2017 Chicago River Summit: Getting Wet in Urban Rivers.

Sponsored by MillerCoors, this half-day conference on March 9, 2017, will bring together water quality and policy experts, river recreators, and advocates to develop and discuss ideas about how to move beyond setting standards to a Chicago and Calumet River system where recreation of all kinds can occur. Sign up for Friends' weekly e-alerts for final details at www.chicagoriver.org.



Participants in the Cal-Sag Plunge plunged in twice, enjoying the cool water on a hot afternoon.

Richard Wilson Joins Friends' Board

Friends of the Chicago River is thrilled to announce the addition of Richard Wilson, AIA, AIC, to our board of directors. Wilson is City Design Director with Adrian Smith + Gordon Gill Architecture. He has 20 years of experience working with public and private sector clients around the world to envision, master plan, design, and build dynamic regions, cities, urban districts and neighborhoods. He is an expert in the design and implementation of public planning and urban design projects that employ innovative approaches and technologies to meet the growing demands of mankind. Wilson's global practice includes award-winning work throughout North America, the Middle East, China and India.



Richard Wilson

While Wilson has worked all over the world, his domestic efforts directly tie him to the river, including the preparation of the Chicago Central Area Action Plan that identifies priority projects related to land use and zoning, transportation, and urban design in downtown Chicago. Also, while with Chicago architecture firm SOM, he was instrumental in the "Chicago Riverwalk Main Branch Framework Plan," which won a Chicago River Blue Ribbon Award in 2010. Recently, Wilson led the "Positioning Pullman" visioning process for the Pullman National Monument, designated in 2015 by President Barack Obama.

Friends Wins Regional Award

In January 2017, the Lake County Stormwater Management Commission (LCSMC) will present Friends with its 2016 Education, Outreach, and Media Award for Friends' public outreach activities in the Chicago River watershed. This award honors an individual, publication, website, or group for addressing topics related to stormwater and floodplain management. The award highlights the ways that Friends and LCSMC's missions intersect to improve water quality, reduce flood damages, and restore and enhance the river system.

"Friends is honored and thrilled to receive this award from the Lake County Stormwater Management Commission, which affirms our commitment to responsible stormwater management," said Margaret Frisbie, Friends' executive director. "Through initiatives such as Overflow Action Days, Friends aims to emphasize everyday actions we can all take to conserve water and prevent combined sewer overflows. Our role as river advocates and educators

is to help the public understand how the watershed's sewers work and how it impacts what ends up in the river system during heavy rain. This award emphasizes that work."

To learn more about Overflow Action Days and simple steps to help the river at home and work, please visit <http://bit.ly/OverflowAction>.

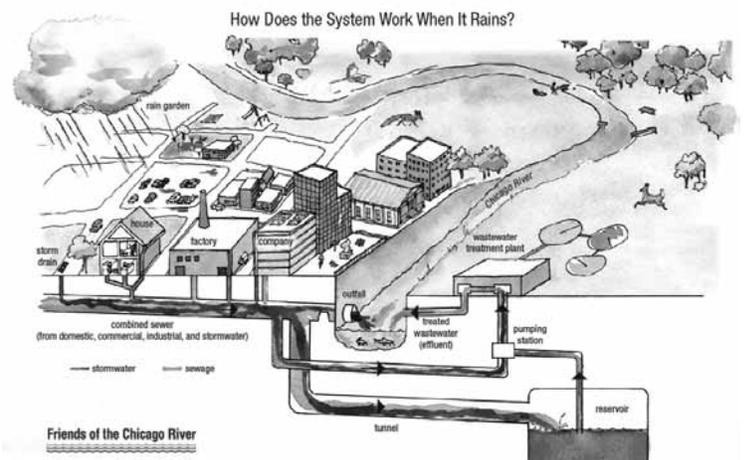


Illustration of a Combined Sewer Overflow from the Overflow Action Days campaign.

The More Fish the Merrier

Building on our two-year effort to increase channel catfish nesting habitat in the river system, Friends of the Chicago River will start planting 4,500 water willow and lizard's tail seedlings in the North Shore Channel next June. Both plants are relatively tolerant aquatic emergent species that will create high quality habitat for aquatic organisms from invertebrates to fish. Additionally, they will protect the shoreline from bank erosion and create shelter for aquatic species during flooding, while improving the aesthetic of the channel for recreators.

Both water willow and lizard's tail are particularly well-suited for the unique conditions of the North Shore Channel. They have been used successfully by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) elsewhere in the state, including the Fox River—where vast stands can be found by Aurora and other municipalities (see photo at right).

These stands established themselves in five to 10 years. This project will primarily benefit a variety of native fish species, including sunfish and minnows, and early life stage fishes of other species. It will also benefit terrestrial and aquatic invertebrates, including insects and crustaceans. The North Shore Channel and North Branch are home to many native fish species. In early September 2014 Friends and IDNR found bluegill, bluntnose minnow, channel catfish, emerald shiner, fathead minnow, gizzard shad, golden shiner, green sunfish, largemouth bass, pumpkinseed, smallmouth bass, spotfin shiners, white suckers, and yellow bullhead in the North Shore Channel. Later in the month, IDNR scientists identified state-endangered banded killifish and a spotted gar there. The spotted gar excited scientists across the region.



Chicago Riverwalk Opens to Acclaim

One hundred and seven years after Daniel Burnham's "A Plan for Chicago" called for a river-edge promenade downtown, the third phase of the Chicago Riverwalk has opened to acclaim. Completing the one-and-a-half mile long trail from Lake Michigan to the confluence of the Main Stem with the North and South Branches, the final three blocks add new under-bridge connections at LaSalle, Wells, and Franklin Streets and three new destinations east to west: The Water Plaza, The Jetty, and The Riverbank.

Friends of the Chicago River has been active in river trail planning with the city for decades and drafted the Chicago River Corridor Design Guidelines and

Standards, which was approved by the City of Chicago in 1989 and remains in force, in considerably expanded form, 27 years later. The guidelines set a precedent for development in and adjacent to the Chicago River system by bringing the river to the forefront



Surveying the newly opened Chicago Riverwalk, Margaret Frisbie (far left) walks with Mayor Rahm Emanuel (middle right) and project engineers.

of the land-use decision making process. One of its signature additions to project approval was a requirement for a 30-foot setback from the river to allow for public access and a continuous Chicago River trail, which was a goal of Friends' founders.

The Chicago Riverwalk expands the miles of trail in place in the most visible location and adds a whole new dimension downtown, with the public walk leading right down to the water on many blocks. Friends was thrilled with the final plan, especially The Jetty, which incorporates concepts piloted by our Fish Hotel that the city expanded even further to improve instream habitat for fish and other aquatic life.

Annual Volunteer Accolades Honor the River's Greatest Champions

Each year, Friends' River Commitment Awards recognize partners, stakeholders, and volunteers who help us achieve our vision of making the Chicago River one of the world's greatest metropolitan rivers. In 2016, Friends bestowed the awards at our October Annual Meeting and honored this year's most inspiring river advocates with the following: River Champion—for going above and beyond the call of duty on behalf of the river through their job, Spirit of the River—for extraordinary efforts that embody the spirit of the river, and Volunteer of the Year—awarded to an exemplary volunteer who exceeds all expectations helping the river.

River Champion Award

Dave McGowan, Ravenswood Media, for his compelling video about Friends' groundbreaking channel catfish habitat project.

Spirits of the River

June Webb, Centennial Volunteer, Whistler Woods, for her devotion to collecting bat and osprey data for Friends' Wildlife Monitoring program.

Mary DeBacker and Ron Rodriguez, co-apprentice site stewards of Whistler Woods, for their tremendous efforts to restore Whistler Woods through Centennial Volunteers.

Volunteer of the Year

Marjorie Brownstein, founding member of the McCormick Bridgehouse & Chicago River Museum Committee, for devoting her time, resources, and creative energy to establishing the museum as one of Friends' broadest reaching programs.

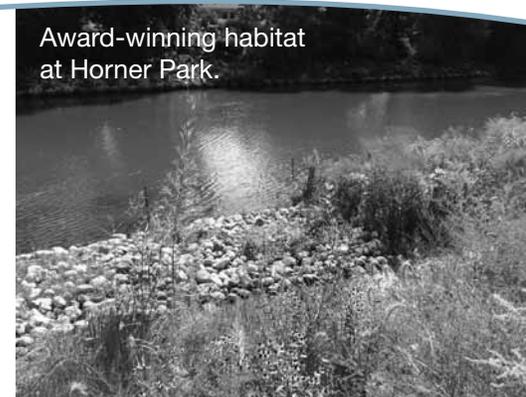
Congratulations to this year's honorees! We are grateful for all that you do to keep the river system and local wildlife thriving and healthy, and we can't wait to see what you accomplish next.



Volunteer of the Year Marjorie Brownstein (on left), with Margaret Frisbie, Friends' executive director, and Sally Fletcher, Friends' board president.

Chicago River Blue: Celebrating River-Sensitive Design

Friends' annual Chicago River Blue Awards highlight outstanding river-edge and watershed projects that prioritize people, wildlife, and clean water. This year, The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers earned the top prize for their ecosystem restoration in Horner Park—which included regrading the riverbank, removing invasive plants, and installing native habitat. Do you wish to nominate a project for 2017? Contact Andy Donakowski at (312) 939-0490, ext. 15 or adonakowski@chicagoriver.org.



Award-winning habitat at Horner Park.

A Millennial Milestone for Birds and Banks

After two years of dedicated hands-on restoration, LaBagh Woods earned a millennial moment in the sun. On October 30, 2016, a joyous community celebration marked the planting of the 1,000th shrub installed as part of the ecosystem restoration taking place at LaBagh through a key community alliance. Partners include Centennial Volunteers (Friends of the Chicago River, the Forest Preserves of Cook County, Friends of the Forest Preserves, Chicago Ornithological Society, and The Field Museum), the LaBagh Woods site stewards, local birders, the North Branch Restoration Project, and GreenCorps Chicago.

Despite its quite urban location, the 161-acre LaBagh Woods is alive with wildlife. In 2015, a group led by birder Jeff Skrentny documented 57 bird species, 16 different mammals, two snake species, three turtle and frog species, more than

20 butterfly species and dozens of plant species, including some that are very rare. This river-edge forest preserve on the northwest side of Chicago is a well-known birding hotspot. Like all of our local natural areas it is important bird habitat because of its location on the Mississippi flyway. Restoring native plants renews bird habitat by providing shelter and food.

The 1,000th shrub ceremony gave partners a chance to acknowledge our progress together, as well as to watch a live planting demo of the commemorative shrub—a common spice bush (*Lindera benzoin*)—by Ken Schaefer of the Chicago Ornithological Society. Friends' executive director, Margaret Frisbie, spoke about the importance of the monthly community restoration days we organize through Centennial Volunteers. These group events directly benefit the Chicago River system while building a strong community of local volunteers. Given the improvement we've seen at LaBagh, it's exciting to envision how many more native plants and birds the area will have by this time next year.

Do you want to be a part of LaBagh Woods' living history? Visit Friends' website for upcoming Centennial Volunteer workdays, which continue all this winter.



Community partners plant the 1000th shrub at LaBagh Woods.

Riverwide Restoration Recap

In addition to LaBagh Woods, Friends has been making an impact at eight other river-edge sites throughout the Cook County Forest Preserves, with a goal of 256 acres. Notably, Centennial Volunteers are working on 54 acres at Kickapoo Woods in the Calumet region—which Friends cleared of invasive buckthorn, revealing an impressive dormant seed bank.

Find out how you can get involved with Friends at www.chicagoriver.org.

Native wildflowers blooming at Kickapoo Woods.



River Stories: Childhood Inspiration Runs Deep

The Chicago River is home to freshwater sponges and Karen Segura has made it her mission to learn all about these fascinating creatures. It all started when she was in the first grade. Segura attended Thomas J. Waters Elementary School, where she was a student in Pete Leki's ecology class, which focuses studies on the Chicago River from first through sixth grades. It was there that she first learned

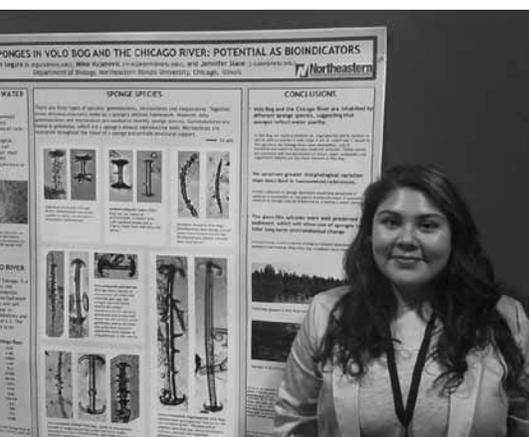
about invasive species and the value of conservation, which inspired her to pursue an environmental path. Today Segura is a biology major in her senior year at Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU), studying fresh water sponges.

She fondly remembers the river clean-up days that led her to bond with nature and her cousins as they worked together to collect trash and find wildlife. "Every time we filled a bag with garlic mustard I felt that I had a purpose, and that it was my duty to help protect the world we live in," Segura recalls.

Currently, her research at NEIU has uncovered three distinct species of freshwater sponges in the river at Glenview Woods:

Heteromeyenia baileyi, *Heteromeyenia tubisperma*, and *Ephydatia fluviatilis*. As sponges require specific living conditions and have only recently reemerged in the river, their existence reveals how water quality is improving. Also, their very presence helps the river, by naturally filtering out bacteria and other microorganisms.

After graduation, Segura plans to pursue a Ph.D. in public health and to keep protecting the environment. She is a true friend of the river who hopes that all kids will understand that even the smallest act of conservation can have a lasting impact. "Our dream back then was to get the river clean enough to swim in," she reminisces. Friends supports that dream and is working on it, too.



Karen Segura, NEIU student and true friend of the Chicago River.

"Canoe" Believe It? Over 2,000 Paddlers in 2016

With 2,000 paddlers in canoes this year, we broke our 20 year record for getting people out on the river through our extremely popular guided canoe trips. Perfect for people of all ages and levels of experience, canoeing with Friends is a great way to see the river up close and learn about its health. Contact Claire Snyder to book a custom trip for your group next summer at (312) 939-0490, ext. 14 or csnyder@chicagoriver.org.



RIFFLES & CURRENTS

MORE NORTH BRANCH TO BIKE

Nature-loving cyclists are about to get a lot more space to roll by the river. In late September, the Forest Preserves of Cook County completed construction of the first phase of the North Branch Trail extension, which starts on Chicago's northwest side and extends up to the Chicago Botanic Garden. Construction work to extend the 18 mile trail an additional three miles south through LaBagh Woods is already more than halfway complete, bringing us even closer to having a continuous riverfront trail by spring 2017.

MORE BEADS BANNED

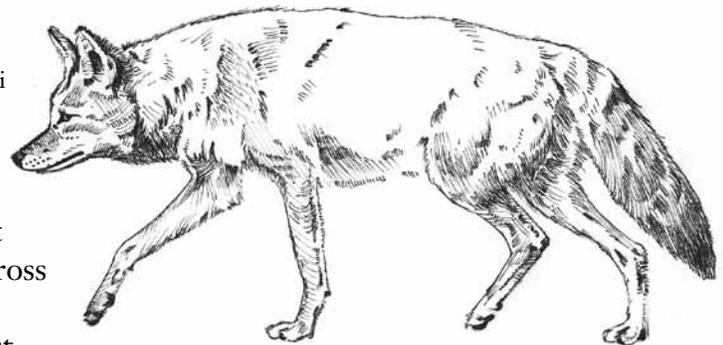
In November, the Alliance for the Great Lakes announced that Canada passed a law banning microbeads from personal care products like toothpaste, body scrubs, and shower gel. These tiny particles are plastic, so they do not dissolve. Instead, they contribute to the massive amount of plastic pollution in water bodies around the world that causes injury to fish, other wildlife, and potentially humans. The ban matches one signed into law by President Barack Obama last December.

The woods along the river are alive with wildlife and among the most exciting are coyotes. Quick, sleek, and beautiful, these apex predators help keep geese, rabbits, and white-tailed deer populations under control and generally avoid "people food," garbage, and, the often-rumored, beloved family pet.

Unfortunately, like most predators, coyotes were historically depicted as tricksters and liars or reviled as cowardly and untrustworthy animals. Thus attitudes toward them remain largely negative, although coyotes are integral to our environment, a link to "wildness" often lost in the urban world. Coyotes really deserve to be admired and appreciated.

Coyotes are medium-sized members of the dog family like foxes and wolves. They have pointed ears, a slender muzzle, usually grayish brown fur, and yellow eyes which easily distinguish them from dogs. Their tails are usually black-tipped. The male coyote weighs in between 25-35 pounds with females just slightly less. Pairs typically mate for life. Coyotes are excellent hunters with exceptional eye sight, hearing, and senses of smell and their varied diet primarily consists of animal meat including deer, rabbits, rodents, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish, and invertebrates, occasionally supplemented with fruits and vegetables. They are masters of adaptation and adjusted to their new surroundings as North America became more developed and the prairies became fields. A good example is that rural coyotes are most active in the morning, daytime, and early evening, while urban coyotes have altered this natural rhythm and hunt at night.

Coyote, *Canis latrans*
Illustration by Jen Pagnini
www.spinystudio.com



Cook County studies reveal that coyotes live all across the region, even including the most densely populated parts of Chicago. While still preferring open areas, the adaptable coyote often crosses between woodland, wetland, savanna and prairie habitats and will piece together territory in parks and other urban natural areas when necessary.

A winter walk in the woods is a good time to see one.

HIGH Water Marks

From membership to River Action Days to the rental of the McCormick Bridgehouse & Chicago River Museum, your contribution supports the Chicago River system. The stewardship of your gift is of the utmost importance to us, and we are grateful for every contribution. Thank you to all those listed below who made contributions of \$250 and above between August 24, 2016, and November 18, 2016.

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. Chicago River Legacy members, who are thoughtfully providing for Friends in their estate plans, are also recognized as Otter Society members.

Mike Alber
Kenneth M. Arenberg and
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Judith Bassoul
Kent Brown and
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Craig and Kate Coit
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Wow Bao - Hot Asian Buns

We apologize if any names have been omitted, misspelled, or otherwise incorrectly listed. If you feel an error has been made, please contact Kadeja Tyler at kt Tyler@chicagoriver.org so that we can correct our records.

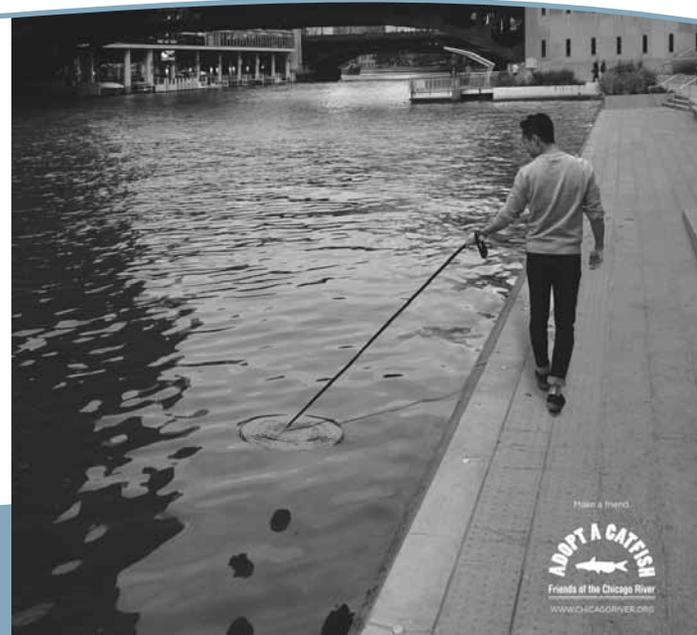
Friends of the Chicago River is a proud member of



What's He Walking?

You can't walk one on a leash, but if you "adopt" a catfish now, 100% of your donation helps make the Chicago River healthier and more fish-friendly. Friends has released 277,000 channel catfish into the river as part of our groundbreaking restoration projects. These young catfish need food, shelter, and a healthy river. Find out how you can help them at www.chicagoriver.org/get-involved/donate/adopt-a-catfish/.

Makes a Great Gift!





Member Spotlight: William “Bill” and Jean O’Neill

Friends would like to turn a spotlight on our members as they share their experiences at or on the Chicago River. It is great to learn how they benefit from membership and/or our programs.

Are you interested in sharing your story with us? Please contact Kim Olsen-Clark at kolsenclark@chicagoriver.org to nominate someone or add your own story to our archives.

What’s your current job?

Jean and I manage industrial buildings.

How long have you been a member of Friends?

We have been members a long time.

What do you value most about Friends’ membership?

More can be done to improve the river system by a group than by a number of individuals.

What is your dream for the future of the Chicago River system?

One day soon you will be able to canoe down the river without having to fear falling in.

Name a favorite in each category: people, plants, and animals.

Since we became members we have seen an increase in people fishing and an increase in plant diversity and wildlife.

Where is your favorite location on the river to visit?

Our favorite part of the river, by bike or on foot, is the North Branch from Irving Park Rd. to Foster Ave. including the small waterfall.

..... 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. We encourage you to participate in our many activities and to invite others to join. Gift memberships are also available.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,500+ The Otter Society | <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Blanding’s Turtle / Business |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> \$ _____ /we wish to only make a donation at this time. | |

Many employers will match your membership and annual donations. Contact your employer’s Human Resources department today to find out if they have a matching gift program.

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- My check made payable to Friends of the Chicago River is enclosed.
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- Yes, please charge the 3% credit card transaction fee to my card so that 100% of my membership/donation goes to Friends.
- Card # _____
- Exp. Date _____ Security code _____
- Cardholder’s name and billing address (if different than above) _____

- I/we wish to be anonymous. Please do not list my/our name.
- I am curious about: volunteering sponsorship planned giving
- Please DO NOT add me to your email communications list.

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

- Members at the \$35 level and above 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,
 - Invitations to special events such as Chicago River Day, Big Fish Ball, and Summer Cruise, and
 - Listing in Friends’ Annual Report.

Business members of \$100 and above, as well as individual/household members of \$250 and above, receive additional benefits.

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 kolsenclark@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.

Friends of the Chicago River

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BE A FRIEND OF THE CHICAGO RIVER!



Remember the River in Winter

Just because the wind is blowing and there is snow on the ground, it doesn't mean you should forget the Chicago River.

Friends offers outdoor restoration days all winter long through our Centennial Volunteer partnership, and there are many places where you can take a walk in the woods along the river to catch a glimpse of a coyote, great horned owl, or white-tailed deer.

Please remember that *your* support has brought the river to life, so please donate before the year-end to help us keep our momentum going. Thank you.

Membership opportunities on page eleven.

 The River Reporter is printed on recycled paper.

Visit our website, www.chicagoriver.org, for more information on getting involved.