Volunteer Efforts Measured by Improving Plant Quality

The Chicago River is improving. We can see the results in lots of different ways: increased property values, business opportunities, improving water quality, and the installation of new infrastructure like the disinfection of wastewater effluent or enhanced stormwater management (see McCook story on page 9). All these lead to a better quality of life for humans (and to a lesser extent, animals and plants).

For an even longer time (104 years, to be exact) the Forest Preserves of Cook County (FPCC) have been the steward and guardian of public land, much of it located along the banks of the Chicago River. And for many decades since then, thousands of people from concerned citizens to scientists to volunteers have been working to improve the quality of habitat found throughout the preserves.

The Centennial Volunteers partnership was started in 2014 to restore habitat and celebrate the 100th anniversary of the forest preserves. This partnership includes the FPCC, Friends of the Chicago River, Friends of the Forest Preserves, and the Chicago Ornithological Society.

Working across nine forest preserves with so many dedicated volunteers removing non-native plants, inventorying plant communities, gathering seeds, planting native trees and shrubs, combating soil erosion, and protecting endangered species, the partnership decided to incorporate an assessment of some of the work being done. We wanted to know how effective the program has been in improving the habitat, not just for people and animals, but for the plants themselves.

Each of the nine Centennial Volunteers sites were surveyed in 2016, and again in 2017, to measure the change in plant quality and the % of native plant coverage at each site. Between the two surveys, restoration occurred at each site. Plant quality was measured by calculating a floristic quality index (FQI). This is based on the Coefficient of Conservatism (C), which assigns a numerical rating (0–10) to each plant species. Native species that have very specific habitat requirements and/or little tolerance of disturbance have high C-values. Weeds have low C-values, and non-native plants have a C-value of 0.

Two out of three ain’t bad: Native spring wildflowers such as bottle gentian (left) and jack-in-the-pulpit (middle) have C-values of 8 and 4, respectively. Non-native species like European buckthorn (right) get a 0.

See page eleven for membership opportunities, or visit our website, www.chicagoriver.org for more information on getting involved.
“Fishable-Swimmable”

Days of record cold have left the river quiet and still; but here at Friends the bustle never ceases as staff continually strives to meet our goal of a fishable-swimmable Chicago River system.

Fishable-swimmable is short hand for meeting the Clean Water Act goal to make all of the “waters of the United States” clean enough for swimming and healthy enough for native fish to thrive and reproduce. It is a goal the nation was supposed to meet by 1983.

When Friends of the Chicago River was founded in 1979 our river was clearly not there yet. Robert Cassidy, whose story of “Our Friendless River” inspired our founding, wrote in Chicago magazine, “The Chicago River is the city’s most neglected resource. It is overshadowed by Lake Michigan, disdained by environmentalists and outdoorsmen alike, neglected, fouled, and abused by industry and by all the rest of us.” But he added, “Nonetheless, it is the second greatest gift that nature has bestowed on this city.”

Many years later those last words ring wonderfully true. The river is cleaner, healthier, and more accessible than it has been for 150 years. Business and civic leaders believe in its value as evidenced by the Chicago Riverwalk, glistening riverfront high rises, neighborhood parks, and suburban developments. Government agencies are investing in clean water and better habitat. Each year more people reach out to see how they can become involved.

Getting to this point wasn’t easy and over the years Friends faced epic battles over water quality improvements, provisions for public access, river-sensitive development, and even for the life of the river itself. (Early ideas for controlling the spread of Asian carp included poisoning the river on a day to day basis—to stop one fish we would have ended them all.) Yet through it all we persevered, and in 2017, some amazing things took place including elected officials formally jumping in the river (see page 3) in September and the amazing appearance of an American eel (see page 8) in October.

Seeing humans and an American eel swimming in the river demonstrates that our hard work is paying off, but such sightings are still too few and far between—and we know there is yet more work to do. So roll up your sleeves, get out your boots, pick up your pen, and, maybe, even put on your bathing suit and strive with us for a truly fishable-swimmable Chicago River.

Margaret Frisbie
Executive Director
The Big Jump Makes a Splash

Friends of the Chicago River celebrated a big milestone in September when representatives from all levels of federal, state, and local government joined our executive director, Margaret Frisbie, and Metropolitan Water Reclamation District (MWRD) Commissioner Josina Morita in jumping into the Chicago River and splashing around! The event, playfully called “The Big Jump,” was organized by Friends and Commissioner Morita to highlight our collective success in improving the river’s water quality and to demonstrate our commitment to making the Chicago River swimmable for all.

As written elsewhere, investments in our massive sewer system, known as TARP/Deep Tunnel, and sewage effluent disinfection means that the water quality throughout the Chicago River system has improved dramatically in recent years. In fact, the MWRD says that the treated effluent discharged daily from their sewage treatment plants is cleaner than the river itself. So while the river is not quite ready for everyone to jump in just yet, it is only a matter of time—and with the approval of a swimmable standard already in place—the law is already on our side.

Funds raised during “The Big Jump” support the Chicago River Schools Network, Friends’ watershed-wide education program that connects students and teachers with the river.

Friends Welcomes New Board Members

Friends of the Chicago River is pleased to welcome two new directors to our board: Marco Ugarte Irizarri (at left), sustainability manager at MillerCoors, and John O’Connell, (at right) managing director at the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce (CIBC).

Irizarri focuses on Molson Coors’ 2025 Global Sustainability Goals which include water stewardship strategies, carbon management, and landfill-free operations. He holds a Ph.D. in Sustainability from Arizona State University and has a background in industrial engineering and quality management. “I’m delighted to be joining the board of Friends, the only organization fully devoted to one of the greatest and historical assets of the city,” said Irizarri.

Also excited to be joining Friends’ board is John O’Connell, who specializes in CIBC’s Construction and Engineering Group. Originally from downstream St. Louis, O’Connell moved upstream to Chicago in 2001 to begin a career in banking. O’Connell has been an instrumental member of Friends’ Bridgehouse Committee since 2014 and co-chairs the annual Bridgehouse Summer Cruise. “I am looking forward to helping improve Chicago’s greatest natural resource,” said O’Connell.
Friends Wins Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence

In September, Friends of the Chicago River was among the recipients of a silver medal for Urban Excellence in Design from the Rudy Bruner Foundation for the 2017 Rudy Bruner Awards which recognize transformative places that contribute to the economic, environmental, and social vitality of American cities. Friends has been a catalyst for riverfront protection for nearly 40 years and was a part of the Chicago Riverwalk design process from the very beginning.

At the award presentation ceremony at The Jetty on the Chicago Riverwalk, Simeon Bruner, the founder of the award, said; “The Chicago Riverwalk is a wonderful example of the transformative power of visionary public leadership and investment in the urban infrastructure of our cities.” The award, sponsored by the Cambridge, Mass.-based Bruner Foundation, is the 18th major honor for the Riverwalk project.

“The City of Chicago can take pride in this national recognition for the Chicago Riverwalk, a transformative project that has reshaped the way people interact with the Chicago River,” Mayor Emanuel said. “By creating the Riverwalk and making investments on the South and North Branches of the river we are building on Daniel Burnham’s vision and turning the waterfront into a magnet for both recreational opportunities and economic growth.”

A major feat of the river-edge transformation was lowering the Riverwalk down to the river’s edge while creating a sustainable, flood-resilient landscape that celebrates the river. Each of the six riverwalk sections offers unique design and programmatic elements, allowing visitors to explore their relationship to the river. This effort has served as a catalyst for additional river-edge development and sets a new standard for what is possible and expected.

“Our Great Rivers” Wins Best Plan Award

In October, Friends of the Chicago River, the City of Chicago, and the Metropolitan Planning Council were awarded “Best Plan” from Friends of Downtown, who seeks to educate, advocate, and celebrate good design and planning in Downtown Chicago. The award was received for “Our Great Rivers,” the City of Chicago’s formal vision for the river reaches that flow through it. Friends’ policy and planning team helped develop the vision which advances many of Friends’ strategic objectives for clean water, dam removal, habitat and more. “Great Rivers brings people to the water’s edge,” said Margaret Frisbie, Friends’ executive director, “and we make it clean healthy, wild, and accessible when they get there.

“Our Great Rivers” ensured that many voices had a say in how Chicago’s rivers will be inviting, productive, and alive.

“The Great Rivers award was Friends 4th Friends of Downtown award and we are proud to have been recognized with these terrific partners, all of whom are working with us to ensure we achieve our vision that the Chicago River becomes one of the world’s greatest metropolitan rivers.”
When the data from 2016 and 2017 was compared, it showed remarkable improvements at nearly all sites. Overall plant quality as measured by FQI rose by 28.9% (15.9 to 20.5) with eight of the nine sites showing improvement.

The overall percentage of each site covered in native species rose by 22% (46% to 68%) and all nine sites improved.

Most remarkably, in 2016, only two of the nine sites had an FQI ≥ 17 and were ≥50% native; however, in 2017, seven of the nine sites had an FQI ≥ 17 and were ≥50% native.

The award for “most improved” site would go to River Oaks Woods; however, all sites showed some improvement.

The restorations efforts of the Centennial Volunteers are having a confirmed effect on plant quality, and our efforts should be continued and expanded. Future data can hopefully serve as a management tool for Centennial Volunteers, guiding further restoration efforts. So this coming spring, get outside and enjoy your (improving) forest preserves.

Centennial Volunteers collect native seeds at LaBagh Woods.

Celebrating Our Bridgehouse Museum Committee

Friends established the McCormick Bridgehouse & Chicago River Museum in 2006 as a strategic outpost to educate people about the ever-improving health and value of the Chicago River through a unique vantage point—one of the historic Michigan Avenue Bridge towers. As Friends’ widest-reaching public program and the cultural anchor of the bustling Chicago Riverwalk, the Bridgehouse Museum is a critically important hub of river-related programming. Along with the five-story exhibit telling the story of the Chicago River and its world-famous moveable bridges, to attract programs such as temporary exhibits, lecture series, and walking tours help visitors delve deeper into river-related topics.

In 2013 Friends formed the Bridgehouse Museum Committee, a group of civic-minded volunteers who work to promote the museum, help raise funds, and support our director, Josh Coles, to improve the visibility of the museum. Committee members are multi-talented professionals who lend their expertise in architecture, public relations, law, local waterways, cultural and creative pursuits, Chicago history, and much more. A deep appreciation for the Chicago River unites our committee.

With the help of these passionate individuals who commit their time, energy, and resources to increase the funds raised in support of the museum, Friends of the Chicago River has been able to expand programs at the museum and offset operating costs through rentals and special events. “The committee members,” said Coles, “truly care about the river and are dedicated to seeing its continued improvement. Their efforts broaden our base of public understanding and support for the river and our wonderful museum.” The museum will open for the season on May 12, 2018.

**Bridgehouse Museum Committee (left to right):** Bill Bartolotta, Judith Bassoul, Bruce Bondy, Michael Borgstrom, Marjorie Brownstein, Tom Kokinakos, Patrick McBriarty, Thomas McGuire, John O’Connell, Terry Sullivan, and Louis “Skip” Weiss.
Our New Five-Year Strategic Plan

Friends of the Chicago River is pleased to announce the completion of our latest strategic plan which will guide us from 2018 through 2022 and drive us even closer to a clean, healthy, fishable, swimmable Chicago River system. The planning process started in early summer when we began interviewing partners and stakeholders about Friends and the needs of the Chicago River system. In September, we invited the entire Friends community to give us input on new programs, priorities, and initiatives and Friends’ board of directors, staff, members, volunteers, partners, and stakeholders all weighed in.

Among the many participants in the process, 225 people participated in the 2017 online stakeholder survey answering a long questionnaire to help us understand their perspectives. Friends then developed a board and staff strategic planning task force to review the community’s responses and to establish new goals to drive us forward. The final plan was approved by the Board on November 15, and it outlines many of the priorities and activities that Friends will pursue over the next five years.

Now is a particularly critical time to have conducted a strategic analysis of what the river needs. Many recent advancements, like sewage effluent disinfection and the completion of first phase of the McCook Reservoir, are having a positive impact. That progress allow us to move forward and place greater emphasis other sources of water pollution like stormwater runoff, chlorides, and erosion; garbage; sediments; trail planning; wildlife habitat and connectivity; and climate impacts.

At the same time we will work to further inspire the cultural shift needed in how people understand and value the Chicago River system. With so many more eyes on the river we have a terrific opportunity to change minds while we change the river as we rise to the challenges that face this incredible natural resource.

Where We Begin

As Friends begins implementing our new strategic plan the number one goal remains improving the physical quality of the river to ensure that it is clean and healthy. While we have seen extraordinary gains in the last 15 years that took decades to accomplish, we know that water quality is too often compromised by combined sewer overflows, stormwater runoff, nutrient pollution, garbage and salt; wildlife habitat is degraded and fragmented; and too many people still believe that it is the once fenced-off sewage-filled back alleyway from the days of the Union Stockyards. Friends knows that it is already better than that and it can be even better. It is not good enough to just bring people to the river’s edge or build beautiful buildings along it. We must make sure that the river is truly alive and serving people and wildlife—and that means a river that we can swim in.

At our core, Friends is a resilient organization and continues to be strategic and intentional. We are the only organization solely dedicated to the river system and we have overcome great obstacles to get to where we are today. As we move forward we will continue to communicate with our stakeholders as we strive to retain great influence in all matters pertaining to the river’s health. We need your support for the whole journey; not just to bring people to the water’s edge, but to make sure that we all get in. To learn more about the new strategic plan, please contact Joanne So Young Dill, director of strategic initiatives at (312) 939-0490, ext. 23, or jdill@chicagoriver.org.

Our river’s future looks very bright indeed.
Got Gullies?

In 2012, to address stormwater runoff and water pollution, Friends of the Chicago River developed a new project that would locate and assess gullies along the river system and create a plan to overcome them. We started by creating a volunteer corps of Gullywalkers who were trained to survey river-edge habitat in the Forest Preserves of Cook County (FPCC). Walking over 50 miles of the river’s edge, they documented 139 gullies, which we categorized into three levels including those to be monitored, those we could fix, and those that were severe and could only be addressed with the commitment and support from FPCC leadership. The results of this project were collected in *Uncovering Gullies: Protecting the Chicago River in the Forest Preserves of Cook County* also known as the “Gullywalking Report.”

What is a Gully?

To address the problems they create, we must first understand what gullies are—scars on the landscape like the little rivulets in the hillside you encounter walking in the woods or that giant ditch that leads to the river. They form when channelized stormwater encounters disturbed soil. Their presence advances erosion and provides a direct pathway for excess sediment and contaminants to enter the river.

Gullies are found along lakes, rivers, and streams throughout the country, but can be particularly severe in areas impacted by humans. The Chicago River system is a perfect example. Impervious surfaces associated with development, coupled with poorly-managed stormwater is a perfect storm for gully formation. Compounding that, the spread of non-native plants in our forests and parks intensifies the impacts of stormwater runoff. As these plants invade native communities, they create thickets with low biodiversity, minimal undergrowth, and shallow root systems that do little to prevent surface water runoff and soil erosion. Something needed to be done.

Fixing Gullies

Once the work of the Gullywalking volunteers was complete, Friends began repairing the gullies. Since 2014, Friends’ staff working with dozens of volunteers have repaired 14 gullies at Kickpapoo and Whistler Woods on the south side and at Bunker Hill and LaBagh Woods on the north. The experiences we gained during this part of the project was compiled into the *Gully Guidance Manual: Solutions for Gully Repair*, written to expand the number of people who can effect gully repair on their own. Friends also developed training tools and presentations to spread the message further. Friends’ original scope was the FPCC but many other opportunities exist including both large public landowners and small private landowners.

Figuring out how to fix a gully is a multi-step process that requires a comprehensive understanding of the physical characteristics of the gully, knowledge of where the water causing it comes from, and both the permission and ability to take action.

As with most restoration projects, gully repair requires monitoring, to verify the establishment of the plant community, assess the efficacy of the repairs, and make modifications if necessary. If you have questions about locating or repairing a gully and need advice, please refer to Friends’ *Gully Guidance Manual*, available at [www.chicagoriver.org/programs/on-the-ground-projects/gullywalking-and-gully-fixing/](http://www.chicagoriver.org/programs/on-the-ground-projects/gullywalking-and-gully-fixing/) or contact us with questions.

Friends will continue to expand our gully fixing footprint and if you have a gully on property that you own or if you are aware of gullies on land owned by a business or government, Friends would like to see those gullies repaired. Of course, working with the permission of the site’s landowner is of primary importance. Contact Mark Hauser, ecology outreach manager, at (312) 939-0490, ext. 11 or email him at mhauser@chicagoriver.org.
The American eel is an enigmatic creature that is born in the North Atlantic in the Sargasso Sea and travels for years to reach their ultimate destinations in freshwater habitats from Canada to South America including the Great Lakes and sometimes the Chicago River (see “Catch of a Lifetime” below).

Ever-present, but rarely seen, American eels can spend as much as 20 years within a watershed; ascending rivers, crossing lakes and pushing toward headwaters; eventually returning to the ocean to spawn. Once they do, it is assumed that adult eels die, but these events have never been witnessed in the wild.

The only freshwater eel found in North America, adult American eels have a long, cylindrical body with a single continuous fin running from the dorsal side to the pelvic area. Eels have thick skin colored olive to brown above, yellowish on the sides and lighter below. Females average 24 to 36 inches in length, while the males are smaller.

In their freshwater homes, eels prey on aquatic invertebrates, amphibians and fish. In turn, predators such as bass, trout, fish-eating birds and mammals eat them. Sadly, many eels are also caught by humans and used as bait for fishing or are themselves eaten. There is a large demand for eels in America, Europe, and Asia.

The Great Lakes population of American eels has declined more than 90% over the last 50 years or more, generally due to habitat loss, dams, and overfishing. Harvest quotas and mechanisms restoring fish passage, like dam removal, a priority of Friends, have helped boost their population. So keep an eye open for the elusive eel. As water quality in the Chicago River improves, we hope to see more and more of them.

American eel
Anguilla rostrata
www.mooloco.com

Catch of a Lifetime

Five-year-old Richie Garcia of Brighton Park, Chicago, caught an eel at the #ChicagoFishes event along the new Chicago Riverwalk on October 13. The event was an opportunity for the public to learn more about the Chicago River, enjoy its improved water quality, and just to hang out and fish.

#ChicagoFishes participants caught dozens of fish representing eight species, including largemouth and channel cats, but the catch of the day was the 2-foot-long American eel. “We were so excited about Ritchie’s eel,” said Margaret Frisbie, executive director of Friends of the Chicago River. “None of us had ever seen anything like it and catching an eel here demonstrates that the work we are doing has been effective.”

Richie Garcia reluctantly holds on to his eel. Hurry up and take the picture!
New Innovations in Restoration Leadership

The Centennial Volunteer partnership at Somme Woods has led to a new and innovative initiative designed to involve more people in the planning and stewardship of this river-edge forest preserve which has been under restoration for the last four years started by a grant from the Chi-Cal Rivers Fund. The volunteers at Somme divided their work area (220 acres total) into 12 zones, averaging about 20 acres each. Work in each zone is overseen by a steward who takes primary responsibly for that area, often mapping features, problems, and proposed work. According to steward, Paul Swanson, “These may include areas for invasive brush removal, follow up foliar spray, dispersal of native seed mixes, and even prescribed burns.”

Adding to the more traditional method of following a plan approved by a single site steward, this new effort encourages each zone steward to lead “field seminar” planning discussions of their zone with other zone stewards. This allows them to better understand the needs of Somme Woods and to share information and accomplish tasks more easily like workday leadership. Through this kind of placed-based restoration and coordination, the volunteers develop a commitment to Somme Woods, the North Branch Restoration Project, the forest preserves, and the science of ecology and conservation—the long-term goal of Centennial Volunteers and its partners.

RIFFLES & CURRENTS

MWRD CELEBRATES WITH RIBBON-CUTTING AT McCOOK

The completion of Stage I of the McCook Reservoir adds 3.5 billion gallons of storage capacity to the Tunnel and Reservoir Plan (TARP). This highly-anticipated event will now help protect 3.1 million residents of Chicago and 36 suburban communities.

The storage facility, run by the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District (MWRD), will provide an estimated $114 million per year in flood reduction benefits while also improving local water quality by capturing polluted water that formerly overflowed into our local waterways during rainy weather.

The McCook Reservoir represents one of the country’s largest public works projects for pollution and flood control. When completed in 2029, the final stage (Stage II) of the reservoir will add an additional 6.5 billion gallons of capacity for a total of 10 billion gallons.

TARP tunnels cut the number of combined sewer overflow (CSO) events in half, capturing an estimated 85 percent of the CSO pollution load. MWRD says that Stage I should virtually eliminate CSOs in the Chicago River.

River Commitment Awards

This year, Friends recognizes several individuals who inspired us with their leadership, spirit, and dedication in helping us advance Friends’ work and mission.

River Champion Award:
Michael Borgstrom
President
Wendella Sightseeing

Spirit of the River Award:
President Maryana Spyropoulos, Commissioner Josina Morita, and Commissioner Debra Shore.
For the first time, we have the privilege of honoring three Metropolitan Water Reclamation District Commissioners.

Volunteer of the Year Award:
Heather Gustafson, Graduate of Sustainability Studies University of Wisconsin – Fox Valley

Educator of the Year Award:
Shelby Riha
Environmental Science Teacher
Maine East High School
From membership to River Action Days to the rental of the McCormick Bridgehouse & Chicago River Museum, your contribution supports the Chicago River system. Friends is grateful for your generous support. Thank you to all those listed below who made contributions of $250 and above from August 15, 2017, through December 15, 2017.

**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.

Anonymous
Mike Alber
Ken Arenberg and Susanne Swisher
Atrium Landscapes
Cinda Axley
Judith Bassoul
Alvin H. Baum Family Fund
Kent Brown and Jane Jacobsen-Brown
Craig and Kate Coit
Carolyn Eleanor Damon Family Foundation
Entertainment Cruises
Sally Fletcher
Flood Brothers
Ginny and Peter Foreman
Margaret Fritsbe
Paul and Kerri Hagy
Tom and Barbora Honn
Lawrence and Denise Kaplan
Stephen and Lydia Kelley
Lakeshore Foundation, Inc.
Jonathan Lehman and Zachary Huelseg
Dave and Maria Loew
Thomas F. McGuire
Michael and Kim Moran
Barbara Morse-Quinn and Barry Quinn
David Reinisch and Julie Kiefer
Riverside Investment & Development Co.
Louis and Nellie Sieg Fund
Richard Wilson
David Wong
The Wrigley Building

**Individually**

- **$5,000 and above**
  - Anonymous
  - Judith Bassoul
  - Craig and Kate Coit
  - The Crown Family
  - Carolyn Eleanor Damon Family Foundation
  - Hank and Wendy Paulson

- **$2,500-$4,999**
  - Ken Arenberg and Susanne Swisher
  - Sally Fletcher
  - David Wong and Wai-Sinn Chan

- **$1,000-$2,499**
  - Anonymous
  - Cinda Axley
  - Peter and Betty Barrett
  - Kent Brown and Jane Jacobsen-Brown
  - Ginny and Peter Foreman
  - Paul and Kerri Hagy
  - Thomas and Barbara Honn
  - Jonathan Lehman and Zachary Huelseg
  - Lary and Denise Kaplan
  - Stephen and Lydia Kelley
  - David and Maria Loew
  - Jacquelline J. Loew
  - Claudine Malik and Richard Ernst
  - Thomas F. McGuire
  - Michael and Kim Moran
  - Barbara Morse-Quinn and Barry Quinn
  - David Reinisch and Julie Kiefer
  - Richard Wilson
  - John D. Ziesmer

- **$500-$999**
  - Mike Alber
  - Vince and Sally Anderson
  - Elizabeth Cilar
  - Brian Crabb
  - Robert and Quinn Delaney
  - Luis Montgomery
  - Jonelle Niffenegger
  - John O’Connell
  - John and Joan van Leesen

- **$250-$499**
  - Sandra Allen and S. James Perlow
  - George and Ellen Benson
  - Suellen Burns and Weston Morris
  - Robert and Marsha Cassidy
  - Randall and Lynn Clark
  - Leah Day
  - Molly Day and John Himmelfarb
  - Patricia A. Fosmoe
  - August Greidanus
  - Austin Hahn

**FOUNDATIONS, CORPORATIONS, AND OTHERS**

- **$50,000 and above**
  - Grand Victoria Foundation

- **$25,000-$49,999**
  - Alphawood Foundation
  - Oberweiler Foundation
  - Prince Charitable Trusts
  - The Richard H. Driehaus Foundation

- **$10,000-$24,999**
  - Bluewater
  - Friends of the Forest Preserves
  - MillerCoors

- **$3,500-$9,999**
  - Chicago Electric Boat Company/Chicago Duffy
  - LeadDog Marketing Group
  - Riverside Investment & Development Co.
  - Xylem, Inc.

- **$1,000-$3,499**
  - Atrium Landscapes
  - Alvin H. Baum Family Fund
  - Chicago Cares
  - Daily Planet, Ltd.
  - Entertainment Cruises
  - Ernst & Young

- **$500-$999**
  - WOW Bao

- **$250-$499**
  - Wow Bao

We apologize if any names have been omitted, misspelled, or otherwise incorrectly listed. Please contact friends@chicagoriver.org so that we can correct our records.

**Canoe Parking in 2018 is High on Our Wish List**

Friends’ canoe program helps hundreds of people experience the river every year and we use two trailers to transport our canoes. The place we’ve kept them during canoe season (March to October) is no longer available to us and we’ve been searching for a new place to store our trailers.

Each trailer is approximately 20 feet long, and holds eight canoes. Our only request is that this new parking spot have some kind of locking gate for security, but an outside location is fine. We just need enough room to maneuver them when picking them up and dropping them off. Please contact Annette Anderson at aanderson@chicagoriver.org, with your ideas.
Calendar of Events

February 24: Chicago River Student Congress
“Missing, Presumed Eaten!” — A fun river conference for all students.
www.chicagoriver.org/education/student-congress/

March 7: Chicago River Summit
Ending the Waste Stream: Pathways to a Garbage-free Chicago River
More info: adonakowski@chicagoriver.org

April 14: Chicago River Day — Site Captain training
More info: aanderson@chicagoriver.org

May 12: 26th Annual Chicago River Day
Annual river clean up/education/volunteer event.
www.chicagoriver.org/get-involved/volunteer/chicago-river-day/

May 12: McCormick Bridgehouse & Chicago River Museum Season Opening

June 5: 13th Annual Big Fish Ball
Big-ticket, annual Gala Event & Fundraiser
www.chicagoriver.org/get-involved/attend/big-fish-ball/

June 27: Bridgehouse Summer Cruise
More info: jcoles@chicagoriver.org

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March 31: Canoe Guide training — Wanted: Canoe Guides

If you are an experienced paddler who wants to show people the magic and charm of the Chicago River, we invite you to apply to be a canoe guide. As the heart and soul of our paddling program, our canoe guides take over 1,000 people out on the river every year. Some guides have been with the program for over 20 years, and new guides join all the time. If you like paddling, working with awesome people and having fun, contact Annette Anderson at aanderson@chicagoriver.org

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.

- $1,500+ The Otter Society
- $1,000 Wild Mink
- $500 Great Horned Owl
- $250 Yellow-headed Blackbird
- $156 Black-crowned Night Heron
- $100 Blanding’s Turtle / Business
- $75 Tiger Salamander / Family
- $35 Chorus Frog / Individual
- $10 Prairie Dropseed / Volunteer,
- $35 Chorus Frog / Individual

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, four 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.
Plan ahead for 2018—It’s just a few months until spring

It’s never too late to plan for the upcoming year, and the best part is that anyone can get involved. In early spring, Friends will be out hosting corporate team-building River Action Days; custom paddling trips; Chicago River “lunch & learns;” field trips for students; and offering bridge lift viewings, tours, and private rentals at the McCormick Bridgehouse & Chicago River Museum.

We’re committed to engaging new and current members who want to enjoy the river with us. Contact Joanne So Young Dill, director of strategic initiatives, at jdill@chicagoriver.org or (312) 939-0490, ext. 23.

2018 Blue Ribbon Awards—Call for applications

Each year Friends recognizes river-edge and watershed developments that best exemplify sustainable design for people, wildlife, and clean water. Please contact Andy Donakowski, policy and planning specialist, at adonakowski@chicagoriver.org to nominate or apply for this year’s awards.