

Your Watershed is..... Fox River

- The Fox River drains 938 square miles in Wisconsin and 1720 square miles in Illinois, emptying into the Illinois River at Ottawa, Illinois. It is the third largest tributary to the Illinois River.
- The Fox River Watershed is one of the most populous areas in Illinois, home to 11% of the state's population.
- During the last 20 years, the watershed's population has grown by 30%. Urbanized land has grown by 25% in just the last 10 years.
- The Fox River-Chain O'Lakes region is the United State's second busiest inland recreational waterway with over 27,000 boat stickers issued yearly.
- Over 214,000 people (residents of Elgin, Bartlett, Sleepy Hollow and Aurora) receive their drinking water from the Fox River.
- The Fox River is home to at least 40 animals and 102 plants listed as Illinois endangered or threatened species.
- N Branch Nippersink Creek, Buck Creek and Morgan Creek are 'biologically significant' streams supporting a diversity of fish and mussels in the Fox River Watershed. Other identified high quality tributaries of the Fox include Nippersink Creek, Boone Creek, Tyler Creek, Ferson Creek and Big Rock Creek.
- All of Illinois' undegraded natural lakes are found along the Fox River including 14 glacial lakes designated as biologically significant: Bangs, Cedar, Cross, Crystal, Deep, E. Loon, Grays, Lily, McCullom, Round, Sullivan, Turner, W. Loon, Wooster.
- 'Fen & Bog Capital of Illinois'- Most of the state's rarest wetland communities are found in the Fox River Watershed. These include Volo Bog, Kettle Moraine at Moraine Hills State Park and Lake-In-The-Hills Fen.



Critical Issues of the Fox River Watershed

Development After 30 years under the Clean Water Act in which conditions in the Fox River improved, the current level of development and population growth in the watershed poses a threat to the quality of the Fox River. The Illinois EPA's most recent report on the water quality of the Fox River cites a number of concerns. Flooding has been a problem in a number of areas. Towns in the Fox watershed will have to design their new development differently if the quality of the Fox River is to be maintained and if tributaries west of the river are going to continue to be high quality streams.

Keys to Watershed-Sensitive Development---

Wetlands must be maintained as critical habitat, for their ability to store floodwaters and as buffers to waterbodies. Wetlands also must have buffers of deep-rooted native plants on their perimeter to prevent their degradation from polluted runoff.

Open space must be incorporated into developments in order to supply land where rain and snow can naturally soak

into the ground, replenishing our drinking water source, feeding mineral rich water to rare fen communities and preventing increased runoff from overwhelming our waterways and causing flooding and bank erosion.

Paved surfaces should be minimized to retain the natural infiltration capacity of the land. Stormwater needs to be routed to vegetated swales where it can be naturally cleansed rather than channeled directly as polluted runoff into the river from curbs, gutters and storm sewers.

Critical Issues (cont)...

Waste Management

As the population of the Fox Watershed grows, municipalities can maintain the water quality of the Fox River by avoiding discharges to waterways. This can be done by using treated wastewater to irrigate cropland, golf courses and other open space areas that have the proper soil and water table requirements. Treatment plants can also protect water quality by utilizing advanced treatment methods that remove ammonia and nutrients from effluent. Regular upkeep of septic systems, especially along the river, is also key to maintaining water quality.

Shoreline Stabilization

The stabilization of severely eroding shorelines can be achieved by a variety of methods using vegetation and rocks in a buffer strip. These methods offer a number of advantages over metal and concrete sea walls. They are more economical and easier to repair, provide better habitat for fish, help capture pollution from runoff, dissipate wave energy and add to the beauty of one's property. Contact your local Soil & Water Conservation District or the Fox Waterway Agency for assistance. Permits are needed for this type of construction work along a navigable waterway such as the Fox River. A joint permit used by the US Army Corps of Engineers, IL Dept. of Natural Resources Office of Water Resources and IL EPA can be found at dnr.state.il.us/waterresources.

Exotic species

Boats used in waters infested with exotic species can introduce these pests into the Fox River ecosystem. To avoid the spread of exotic species such as Eurasian milfoil and zebra mussels into the Fox, be sure to inspect, wash and dry your boat for at least 5 days before moving it into the Fox River system from known infested waters.

Vital Information for Fox River/Chain O'Lakes Shoreline Residents-The Chain O'Lakes and the Fox River south to the Algonquin Dam is a unique region within the Fox watershed. The popularity of boating in this region creates special issues for this part of the watershed.

Piers and other structures

Pier construction requires review and permitting to assure that the structure does not interfere with the navigable uses of the Fox River. A joint permit used by the US Army Corps of Engineers, IL Dept. of Natural Resources Office of Water Resources and IL EPA can be found at dnr.state.il.us/waterresources.

Resources

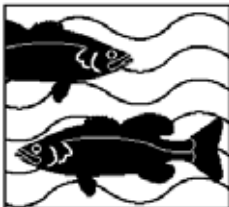
Permits-

- Boat stickers and User Fee Stickers-available from Fox Waterway Agency, 45 S. Pistakee Lake Rd, Fox Lake, IL 60020, 847-587-8540, www.foxwaterway.state.il.us
- Piers, decks, shoreline protection, any dredging activity-IL Dept. of Natural Resources, Office of Water Resources, 847-705-4341, dnr.state.il.us/waterresources

Publications-

- Fox River Watershed in Illinois poster-available from Friends of the Fox River
- *Integrated Management Plan for the Fox River Watershed in Illinois, Implementing the Plan Tool Kit*-available from Fox River Ecosystem Partnership
- Fox River Watershed Resource Directory-available from Max McGraw Wildlife Foundation (847-428-2240)
- *Streambank and Shoreline Protection Manual and Riparian Area Management: A Citizen's Guide*-available from the Lake County Stormwater Management Commission (847-377-2600) or at their website at www.co.lake.il.us/stormwater
- *Living on the Fox River: A Riverfront Property Owners Guide*-available from the Kane-DuPage Soil & Water Conservation District (630-584.7961 ext. 3 or at their website at www.kanedupageswcd.org)
- *McCullom Lake: Taking Care of Our Lake Treasure*-available from McHenry County Defenders (815-339-0393 or mcdef@owc.net)
- *Channel & Catherine Lakes: Taking Care of Our Chain O'Lakes Treasures, Enhance and Protect Your Shore and We Hate Exotics: Help Prevent the Spread of Aquatic Exotic Plants and Animals*-available from the Fox Waterway Agency (847-587-8540 or www.foxwaterway.state.il.us)

For Assistance, Contact-



Friends of the Fox River

P.O. Box 1314
Crystal Lake, IL 60039-1314
815/356-6605
info@friendsofthefoxriver.org
www.friendsofthefoxriver.org



Fox River Ecosystem Partnership

c/o Kane-DuPage Soil & Water Conservation District
545 S. Randall Rd.
St. Charles, IL 60174-1592
630-482-9157

info@foxriverecosystem.org
www.foxriverecosystem.org