

Freeing the Fox

A preview of the undamming of the
Fox River Valley



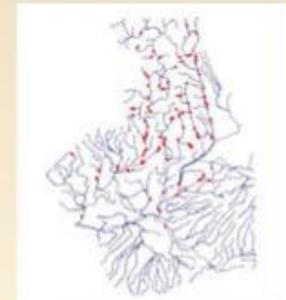
What are the benefits of dam removal?

- Cleaner water
- Better fishing
- Better bird and wildlife viewing
- Better boating
- Improved public safety
- New parkland
- Budget savings
- New business opportunities



Dam Removal: Restoring Habitat and Connectivity

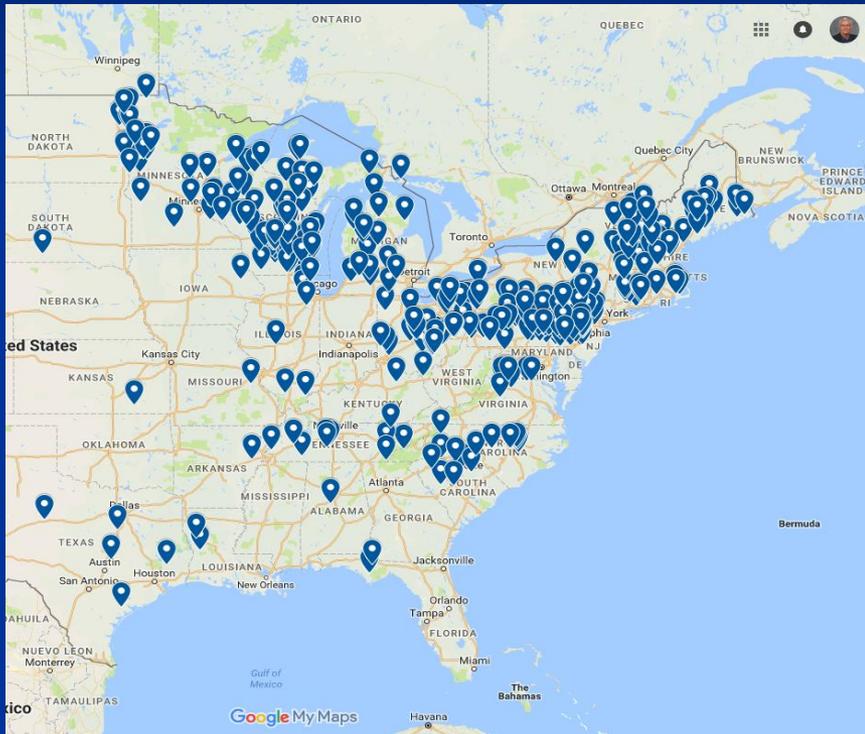
- Dams have severe negative impacts on aquatic ecosystems, and are a primary factor in the loss of fish and mussel species diversity in North America.
- A total of 1,150 dam have been removed in the US improving habitat and water quality, and reconnecting isolated stream and river segments.
- While fish passage has been somewhat successful in reconnecting waterways, it does not improve the water quality and habitat degradation and is often more expensive.
- In Northeastern Illinois, past water quality problems have caused loss of fish and mussel species in many rivers and streams.
- Since the Clean Water Act, most streams have improved and could support "lost" species.
- Lack of connectivity precludes full restoration in these streams.



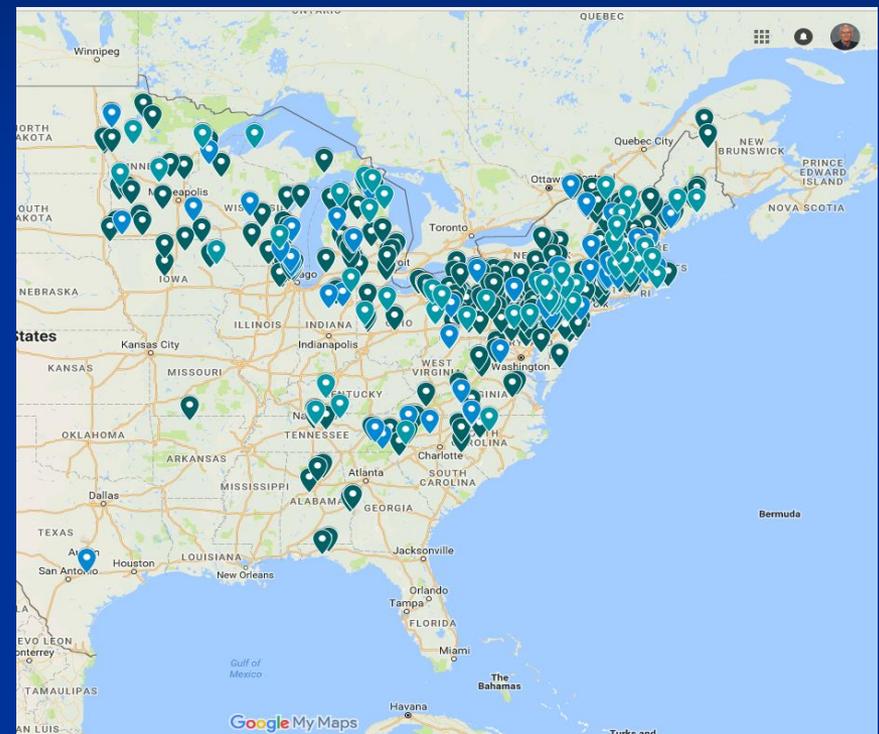
“Undamming the DesPlaines” IDNR s. Pescetelli Dams in NE IL

Obsolete Dam Removals Becoming Common

Source: AmericanRivers.org

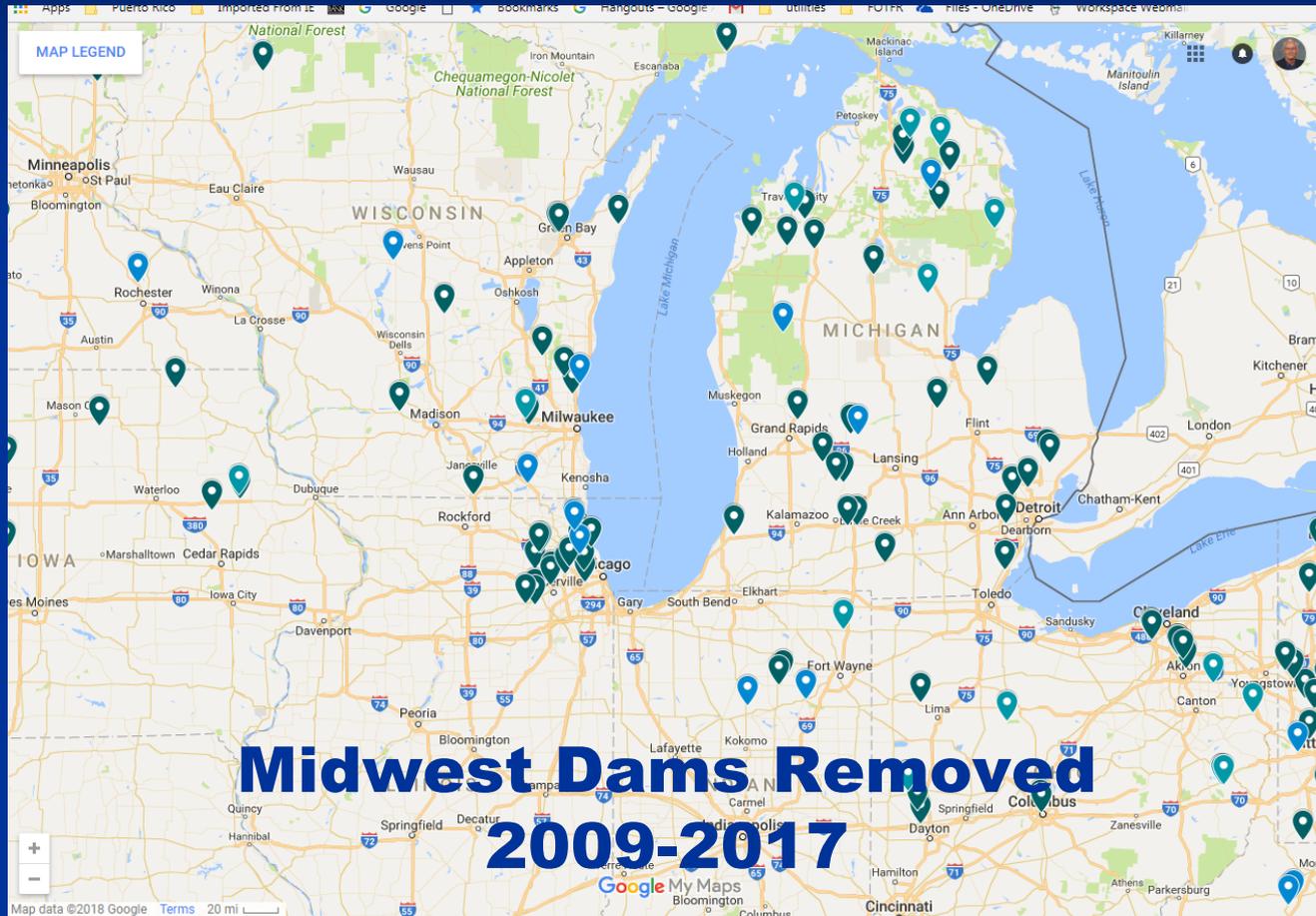


1916-2008



2009-2017

Many Midwest dams have been removed successfully in recent years



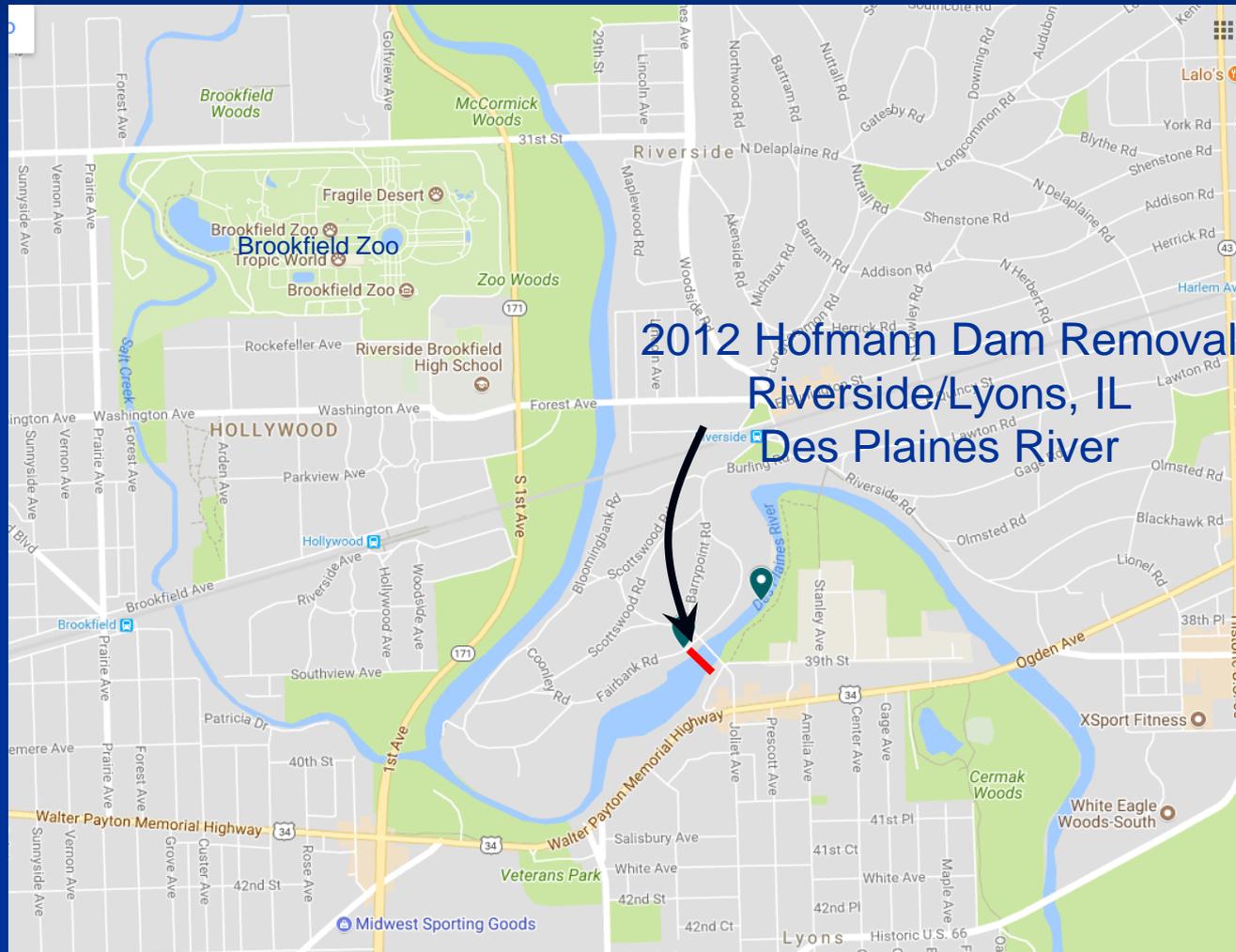
Live map (if internet available)



<https://americanrivers.org/>

What will dam removal look like?

Not all dams (or rivers) are the same but many share the characteristics of those on the Fox.



The Des Plaines River is a little more than half the size of the Fox, but these two shallow warm water rivers have much in common



Hofmann Dam July 2012

Brookfieldangler.com



In July 2012 the Hofmann Dam, a dam similar to those on the Fox, was removed



5/30/2008

A broad, shallow, slow moving pool lay behind the long obsolete dam, collecting silt and decomposing debris creating an aquatic wasteland

River Flow

dam

5/30/2008





After dam removal the former "pool"
wasn't pretty

4/2/2013

In its first spring the restored river channel was distinct from the mud and sand flats of the former pool

former dam

4/2/2013

Google Earth

1998

Imagery Date: 4/2/2013 41°49'09.78" N 87°49'28.70" W elev 611 ft eye alt 2241 ft



4/30/2015

In its third spring new
vegetation in the river's
original riparian zone was
evident

4/30/2015

Google Earth

7/11/2016

By the fourth year new
vegetation was well
established with the river
seeking its natural course
and characteristics

Image © 2018 DigitalGlobe

7/11/2016

Google Earth

1998

Imagery Date: 7/11/2016 41°49'09.78" N 87°49'28.70" W elev 611 ft eye alt 2241 ft

Today we look upstream past the remains
of the former dam



Hofmann Dam Site July 2018

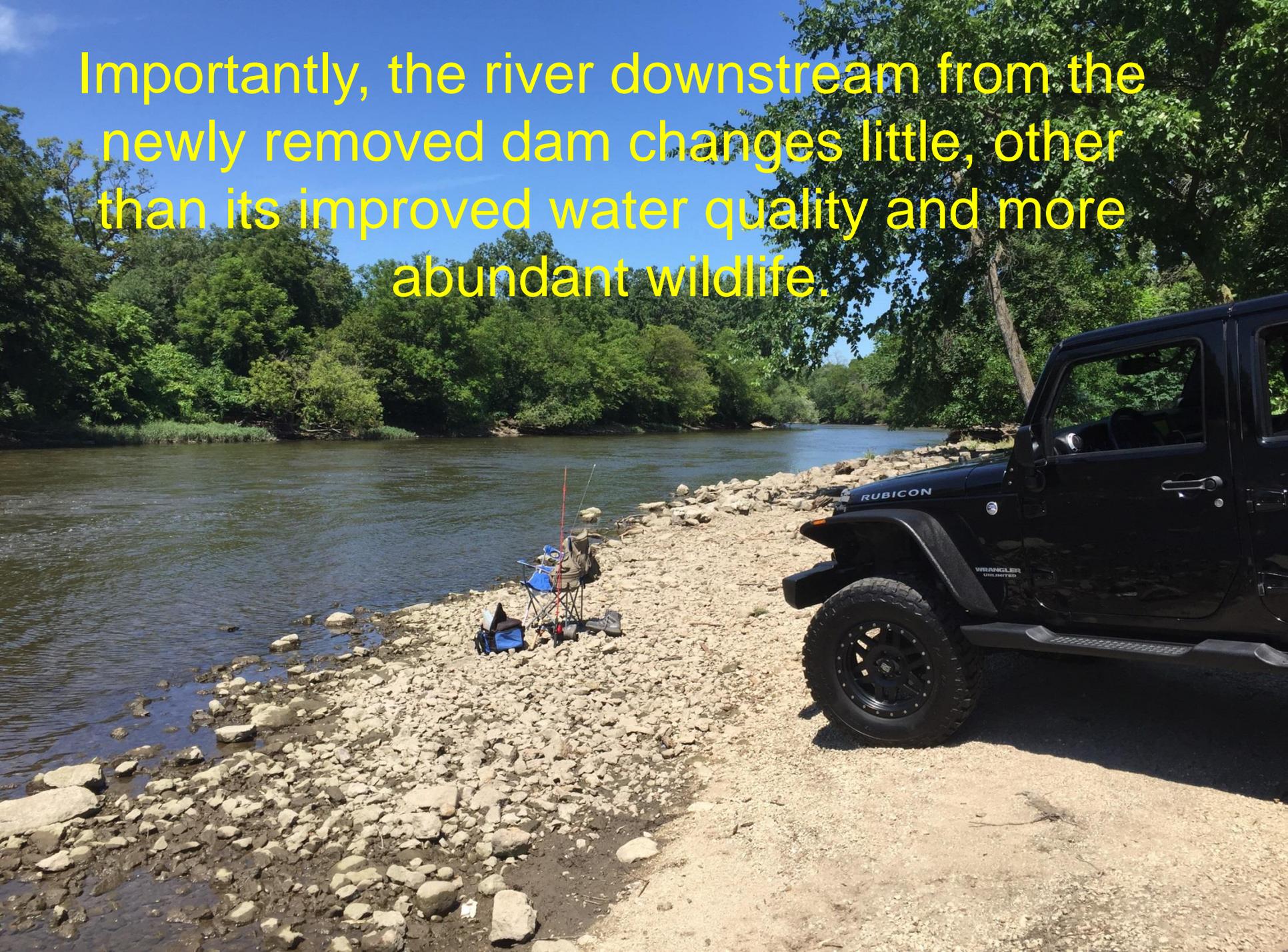
Where stagnant water once pooled a vibrant ecosystem now flourishes

**Former Hofmann Dam
Pool
July 2018**



And a much healthier river provides great new habitat for fish and wildlife

Importantly, the river downstream from the newly removed dam changes little, other than its improved water quality and more abundant wildlife.



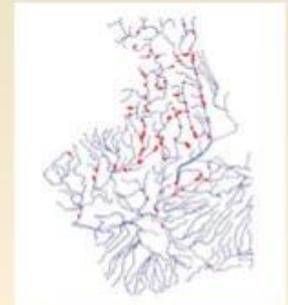
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"Undamming the DesPlaines" IDNR s. Pescetelli

Dams in NE IL

- ***And a more beautiful riverfront***

“cities need to realize that one of the most important environmental projects they can be working on these days is restoring the city’s most important piece of infrastructure, which is often the river running through their cities. “

- Jane Goodman, City President, South Euclid, Ohio, Executive Director of Cuyahoga River Restoration

<https://nextcity.org/features/view/dam-removal-cuyahoga-ohio-epa-funding-restore-watersheds>

Cuyahoga Fall's dam removals, Ohio



[Click here to watch it all happen!](#)

(internet link required)



Friends of the Fox River preserves, restores and protects the Fox River Watershed's resources by connecting people with nature through education, research, restoration and advocacy.

Click to
restart