

ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN 2006-2011



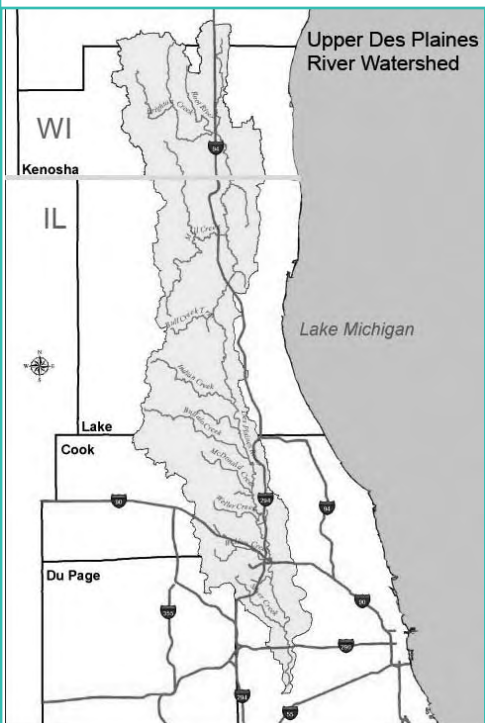
UPPER
DES
PLAINES
RIVER
ECOSYSTEM
PARTNERSHIP

UDPREP: A BRIEF HISTORY

UDPREP is one of 41 Ecosystem Partnerships formed by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources' (IDNR) Conservation 2000 Program. Envisioned as local citizen advisory councils, Ecosystem Partnerships were initially designed to coordinate habitat improvement projects and help IDNR review funding requests at the watershed level—operating on the premise that local stakeholders have the most intimate understanding of the opportunities and challenges facing their watersheds.

Thanks to the ongoing encouragement and support of IDNR and other key partners, UDPREP incorporated in 2003 and began to expand its range of services.

Today, UDPREP sees a tremendous opportunity to build a regional constituency of active, informed stakeholders working to restore and protect the Upper Des Plaines River Watershed. The thrust of our new five-year plan is to foster a vigilant and effective community and citizen network, providing them with resources, information, connections, and support.



Map courtesy of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

UDPREP sees a tremendous opportunity to build a regional constituency of active, informed stakeholders working to restore and protect the Upper Des Plaines River Watershed.

RESTORATION CHALLENGES

While this strategic plan is designed to articulate a vision for UDPREP's organizational development, the partnership's ultimate challenge is to address the key threats to the health of the Upper Des Plaines River Watershed.

Changes in land-use throughout the watershed have significantly reduced our river system's ecological and hydrological integrity. As wetlands and floodplains are lost and impervious surfaces expanded, the landscape's water-holding capacity has diminished. The result is a dramatic change in the intensity and impact of flood events. Major floods are a threat to health and safety, impair our local economies, and degrade our community's quality of life.

Within the river itself, we are not only witnessing an alarming change in water quantity—higher peak flows during storm events and lower average base flows—but a continued decline in water quality. During storms, pollutants such as oil, construction residue, and chemicals are washed off paved

surfaces into the river. These pollutants are severely degrading water quality and, consequently, the river's capacity to support human uses and wildlife populations.

In addition, the ongoing loss of natural areas is robbing our region of the places we prize for wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities, floodwater storage, and aesthetic beauty. And the fragmentation of our natural spaces hurts local wildlife by significantly reducing the sizes of areas—and connections between areas—where they can safely live, forage, and raise their young.

Fortunately, solutions to these problems are within our grasp. Using this strategic plan as our guide, UDPREP will work with landowners, businesses, nonprofits, developers, government officials, and citizens to find solutions. Together we will build a constituency of local stakeholders who are ready to utilize their skills, ingenuity, and know-how to revitalize and sustain the health of the watershed for future generations to enjoy.

Major floods are a threat to health and safety, impair our local economies, and degrade our community's quality of life.



Upper Des Plaines River flood, May 2004

DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this plan, the term “**STRATEGY**” refers to a method for achieving our mission. A “**GOAL**” is a broad outcome statement, and an “**OBJECTIVE**” is a more precise outcome that supports the achievement of the goal.

The term “**STAKEHOLDER**” refers to anyone who has an interest in the health of the watershed—be it financial, personal, recreational, professional, or social. Stakeholders include, but are not limited to, residents, businesses, municipal governments, developers, farmers, outdoor enthusiasts, private consultants, educational institutions, state and regional agencies, nonprofit organizations, and land owners.

STRATEGY 1 ORGANIZING/COORDINATING

“Encourage watershed and subwatershed leadership, stewardship, and volunteer activities.”

We start with a base of 74 towns – home to over 1.3 million people and workplace to many more. Our challenge is to foster, from this base, a network of active and informed watershed leaders. This means creating opportunities for stakeholders to convene, share ideas, and gain momentum for their watershed improvement initiatives. It means providing the framework and support for forming targeted, effective working groups. And it means providing access to financial resources to help launch the best projects.

GOAL 1:

Establish and support project committees to implement specific, short-term watershed improvement projects.

5-YEAR OBJECTIVES:

- ❑ Building on existing research, including the 2000 Watershed Restoration Action Strategy, UDPREP will conduct a needs assessment to prioritize committee formation. Key factors to consider include current watershed restoration needs, funding availability, and partnership opportunities.
- ❑ Develop project goals for each committee and recruit local experts to serve as committee members.
- ❑ Help committees flourish and reach their goals by providing structure, information resources, and support.

GOAL 2:

Support programs developed by partner organizations that complement UDPREP’s mission and 5-year Plan.

5-YEAR OBJECTIVE:

- ❑ Assist partners’ efforts by participating in their committees and sharing information, contacts, and other resources.
- ❑ Meet one-on-one with potential partners to identify common interests and develop mutually beneficial projects.

GOAL 3:

Convene networking events that serve the needs and interests of watershed stakeholders.

5-YEAR OBJECTIVES:

- ❑ Host annual event to build watershed camaraderie and facilitate information sharing among stakeholders representing a wide spectrum of interests.
- ❑ Sponsor quarterly guest speaker series to educate stakeholders about pressing watershed issues and to identify collaborative opportunities to address them.
- ❑ Organize annual watershed tour to give stakeholders an opportunity to examine, up close, some of the many interesting projects underway in the basin and to share ideas and lessons learned.

GOAL 4:

Investigate the feasibility of establishing a grantmaking program to support local watershed restoration efforts.

5-YEAR OBJECTIVE:

- ❑ Identify the financial, administrative, and legal requirements and resources necessary for creating and managing a grantmaking program.

UDPREP Watershed Tour



Our annual watershed tour is a valuable opportunity to share ideas and lessons learned.

SIX STRATEGIES FOR BUILDING A STRONGER, MORE EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIP

COMMUNICATING

“Keep partners abreast of the latest watershed news and information.”

The Upper Des Plaines River Watershed is buzzing with activity. Each day brings new funding opportunities, fascinating scientific discoveries, and compelling success stories. UDPREP will develop its communications systems to help ensure this valuable information reaches the watershed management community and the public at large.

GOAL 1:

Develop dynamic communications systems.

5-YEAR OBJECTIVES:

- ❑ Build and maintain an informative and useful web site.
- ❑ Publish biannual printed newsletter and bimonthly electronic newsletter.
- ❑ Upgrade and maintain master database to include key stakeholder contacts throughout the watershed.
- ❑ Post timely, informative announcements on UDPREP’s listserv.

GOAL 2:

Utilize external networks to distribute news and information.

5-YEAR OBJECTIVES:

- ❑ Deliver news to a wider audience of stakeholders and encourage strong participation in UDPREP activities by utilizing public news media, partner communication networks, and outreach opportunities at key meetings and conferences.

EDUCATING

“Educate the public and public officials about their impact and their role in protecting natural resources.”

UDPREP will strive to answer the public’s questions about this natural wonder that flows through their community. And, as public officials face the important challenge of developing sensible watershed management policies and plans, UDPREP will implement a targeted campaign to provide them with the tools they need to make sound decisions.

GOAL 1:

Conduct targeted outreach campaign to local public officials.

5-YEAR OBJECTIVES:

- ❑ Host events and speaking engagements with public officials in order to update them on crucial watershed issues and identify partnership opportunities.
- ❑ Reach out to private sector stakeholders—such as developers, their consultants, and large property owners—who work closely with public officials on watershed issues.
- ❑ Create comprehensive database of stakeholder contact information.
- ❑ Send an annual news communiqué to village and city leaders.

GOAL 2:

Create clearinghouse of watershed information resources for both public and private stakeholders.

5-YEAR OBJECTIVES:

- ❑ Develop simple, informative watershed map—for use online and in hard copy—to help stakeholders better understand the size and scope of the watershed.
- ❑ Compile and maintain library of useful watershed information, including an inventory of key issues, a guide to agencies, and “what you can do” materials.

STRATEGY 2



WHAT IS A WATERSHED?

A watershed is an area of land that drains into a water body such as a stream, river, or lake. Watershed boundaries are defined by ridges or high elevation points. Rain that falls anywhere in the watershed will ultimately flow, by the force of gravity, into the water body.

STRATEGY 3

69%
of Americans
cannot define the
word ‘watershed’
according to a 1998 poll
by the National Environmental
Education and
Training Foundation.

STRATEGY 4 FUNDRAISING ASSISTANCE

“Provide stakeholders with proposal writing assistance, notification of funding opportunities, and technical review of funding applications.”

A strong proposal starts with a good idea. Articulating that idea—with the support of realistic budgets, timelines, and action steps—is an art. Drawing on the skills and savvy of regional experts, from scientists and planners to writers and politicians, UDPREP will identify key funding sources and help local stakeholders develop strong grant proposals.

GOAL 1:

Create a clearinghouse of fundraising information.

5-YEAR OBJECTIVES:

- Collect and distribute information about funding opportunities and proposal writing techniques.

GOAL 2:

Provide technical review services for stakeholders applying to key local, state, and federal funding programs.

5-YEAR OBJECTIVES:

- Create and convene committees of watershed experts to review proposals and offer advice to applicants, helping them to develop better, more competitive proposals.
- Review and rank local proposals for the administrators of C2000, IEPA 319, and other grantmaking programs to help them identify the best projects to meet program and watershed needs.

STRATEGY 5 PLANNING

“Support watershed planning for every subwatershed in the basin.”

When is a watershed plan more than just a plan? When it qualifies the region for funding! Many local, state, and federal grant programs favor proposals that are based on high-quality, locally approved watershed plans—reason enough for any community to want one. More importantly, creating a sound watershed plan is a common sense approach to addressing watershed problems and provides public officials and the private sector with a crucial guide for future resource management decisions.

GOAL 1:

Support regional authorities’ and organizations’ efforts to develop subwatershed plans.

5-YEAR OBJECTIVES:

- Provide input on subwatershed prioritization by utilizing existing data, studies, and regional expertise.
- Help organize grassroots supporters of watershed planning and advocate for necessary funding allocations.

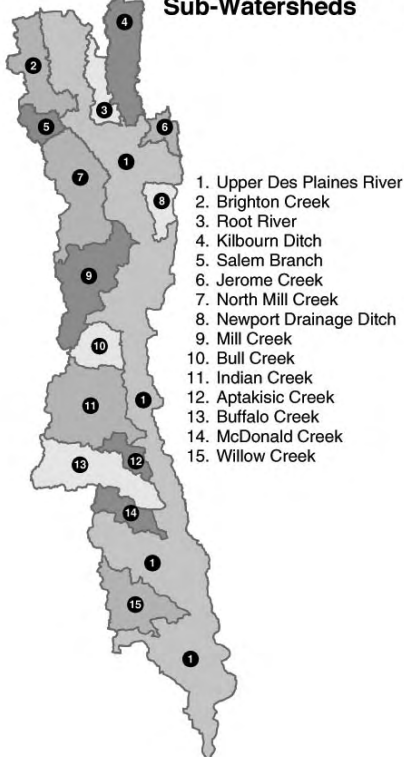
GOAL 2:

Compile and distribute resources that explain the steps to sound planning and promote the value of planning.

5-YEAR OBJECTIVES:

- Promote the benefits of watershed planning by compiling and sharing a collection of useful tools and resources, including model plans, lists of funding sources, and how-to materials.

Upper Des Plaines River Sub-Watersheds



BUILDING UDPREP

“Improve UDPREP’s institutional capacity to fulfill its mission.”

To achieve the ambitious goals set out in this plan, UDPREP will need to rise to a new level of capability over the next five years. We will need to expand our human and financial resources. We will need to upgrade our equipment and expand our board and active membership. During this period of growth, we will improve our internal systems while retaining our inclusive and dynamic character.

■ GOAL 1:

Grow and maintain UDPREP’s administrative structure.

5-YEAR OBJECTIVES:

- ❑ Build an active, 7-member Board of Directors.
- ❑ Create and maintain key personnel positions, including a Partnership Coordinator and Administrative Coordinator.

■ GOAL 2:

Build financial resources and tangible assets to support UDPREP’s organizational goals.

5-YEAR OBJECTIVES:

- ❑ Increase total annual revenue from grants and donations from \$25,000 in 2004 to \$75,000 in 2011.
- ❑ Build a membership program that reaches communities throughout the watershed and increases local government and private sector representation. Secure and retain 100 members by 2011.
- ❑ Establish a permanent address in the watershed and maintain modern office equipment.

■ GOAL 3:

Promote UDPREP’s role as an effective watershed leader.

5-YEAR OBJECTIVES:

- ❑ Achieve name and logo recognition within the watershed community in order to increase partner participation, grow our membership, and boost support for our work.

To achieve the ambitious goals set out in this plan, UDPREP will need to rise to a new level of capability over the next five years.

OUR MISSION



UDPREP's mission is to preserve, protect, and enhance the Upper Des Plaines River Watershed through stakeholder education, collaboration, and technical assistance.

UDPREP is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Donations are tax-deductible.

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