



RIVER

talk

FALL 2011

North Mill Creek/Dutch Gap Canal: First Bi-State Watershed Plan

Mammoth remains, horses, dairy cows, plant nurseries, rare sloughs, sedge meadows, lakes, woods, farm fields can all be found in the North Mill Creek/Dutch Gap Canal watershed. The diverse watershed spans the state line including the Villages of Bristol WI and Antioch, Lindenhurst, and Old Mill Creek in Illinois.

Known as the Dutch Gap Canal in Wisconsin and North Mill Creek in Illinois, this watershed's namesake stream forms in the headwaters of the Des Plaines River. The Lake County Stormwater Management Commission coordinated the efforts of more than 130 watershed stakeholders as they developed a watershed management plan to address poor water quality in the watershed and in 10 of the watershed's lakes.

The largest landowner in the watershed is the Lake County Forest Preserves with Ethel's Woods, Raven's Glen, Prairie Stream and the new Dutch Gap and Pine Dunes Forest Preserves. 2012 is likely to bring the conversion of the highly impaired Rasmussen Lake on North Mill Creek in Ethel's Woods back to its natural stream channel. The Forest Preserve is also developing long term management plans for its new preserves.

The Illinois EPA helped fund this first bi-state watershed-based planning effort for the Des Plaines. The draft watershed plan will be released for public comments later this fall. Contact the SMC if you would like to be put on the contact list for future watershed news.

www.lakecountyil.gov/Stormwater/LakeCountyWatersheds/Pages/NorthMill.aspx



Are you a member? Renew your UDPREP membership or become a member. See p. 6.

Who is UDPREP?

Our mission is to preserve, protect, and enhance the Upper Des Plaines River Watershed through stakeholder education, collaboration, and technical assistance. We bring people together to share ideas and discover partnership opportunities. We work with community leaders to identify grant prospects and develop strong proposals. And we work with the top professionals in the region to promote sound restoration plans and projects.

The center section of this issue of our newsletter is devoted to sharing the successes within our watershed in 2011. Our partners were municipalities, county agencies, and other not-for-profit groups all working towards similar goals. As we head into 2012, we plan to continue our role in fostering the collaboration between these many entities, both large and small.



Dale Effering describes nutrient management for the Effering Family Dairy Farm in 1927 in Bristol, WI. Dale was part of the North Mill Creek/Dutch Gap Canal watershed tour.

2010-2011 UDPREP Year in Review

From our popular Des Plaines River clean-up event sponsored by REI, a very special canoe trip on the upper Des Plaines River for members, to our Green Infrastructure for Green Communities Initiative sponsored by the Grand Victoria Foundation – 2011 has been a full year for UDPREP.



December 2010

Annual meeting “Green Seems for Green Dreams” program featured Peg Kohring of the Conservation Foundation and Bill Davis of the Lake County Forest Preserve District.



December 2010

Workshop on Green Infrastructure with Dennis Dreher, Cowhey, Gudmundson and Leder, Ltd. Co-sponsored by the Bull Creek/Brook Watershed Council.



February 2011

Brownbag briefing on why “Fish Don’t Lie” with guest speaker Steve Pescitelli, Illinois Department of Natural Resources.



April 2011

“Operation Sidewalk Make-over” and “CPR on the DPR” projects were presented at a brownbag briefing by students from Prairie Crossing Charter School and Warren Township High School respectively.



May 2011

Upper Des Plaines River clean up at Independence Grove Forest Preserve.



May 2011

Special members events, a morning canoe trip on the river guided by Steve Barg of the Liberty Prairie Conservancy.



June 2011

Brown bag briefing focused on “Urban Retrofits with Green Infrastructure” with Deanna Dahloouk, Hey & Associates, and Ken Scheffer from Oakton Community College.



July 2011

“Biofitting a Suburban Yard” a residential tour featured international landscape designer Marcus de la Fleur. Event co-sponsored by the Bull Creek/Brook Watershed Council.



September 2011

Brown bag briefing “Using Green Infrastructure in Designing New Communities” with Tom Price of Conservation Design Forum.



October 2011

“Green Infrastructure: Making a Difference in the Watershed” bus tour featuring green infrastructure projects in Lincolnshire, Bannockburn and Mettawa.

If you missed any of these fabulous events in 2010-2011, you can find presentations and more photos on the Upper Des Plaines River website.

Watershed Partner Projects

Wheeling Agreements Will Alleviate Flooding

An historic intergovernmental agreement between the Wheeling Park District, Village of Wheeling, and the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater (MWRDGC) will alleviate flooding on the Des Plaines River and provide recreational benefits to the Wheeling community.

Authorized by the Park District Board of Commissioners in 2010, the agreement called for the District to transfer property in Heritage Park to MWRDGC for compensatory storage for the Levee 37 project constructed along the Des Plaines to protect homes from floods.

Currently home to the District's Parks and Facility Maintenance building and a water retention area, the area will contain a storm water storage basin featuring native landscaping bordered by ornamental decorative fencing. Additional storage also will also be provided throughout the park in bio-swales and storage areas.

In exchange for the use of the land, MWRDGC has agreed to redevelop portions of Heritage Park in accordance with the Master Plan prepared by the Heritage Park Advisory Committee. Work is anticipated to begin in 2012 with completion by the end of 2013. Park District staff continues to conduct public presentations to keep the community informed. The completed project will serve as a reminder of what can be accomplished when public entities work together to improve the quality of life for the communities they serve.



LFOLA's Center for Conservation Leadership

Following the flow...Nine graduates of Lake Forest Open Lands' Center for Conservation Leadership (CCL) program experienced a week long learning trip to New Orleans this July. This trip expanded the students' knowledge of a watershed and interconnectedness as well as human intervention on natural environments.

As a result of this trip the students expressed a greater appreciation for their role in the larger watershed. They look forward to sharing that knowledge with others and better stewarding their own local water resources. The Des Plaines River, ultimately flows into the Mississippi through the Illinois River and down to the Gulf of Mexico. CCL accepts 20 diverse students (ages 13-15) from Lake County for the first year Certificate Program. Graduates of the first year program are invited to continue in CCL through internships with partner conservation organizations.

For information about participating in the program, or to sponsor an intern, visit www.lfola.org or contact Susie Hoffmann at shoffmann@lfola.org or 847-234-8388.

Winner of SMC's 2011 Stewardship of the Year Award



Watershed Partner Projects

Dam No More!

by Jack Snarr



Some eighty years ago the Ryerson family built a low rise sheet steel dam across the Des Plaines River, ostensibly so farm equipment could be moved across the river. Recent interest and encouragement from Lake County residents and environmental groups led the Lake County Forest Preserve District to budget for the dam removal in early February 2011. Once the east side of the dam was removed and natural flow was restored, Andy Cocallas, an avid river canoeist gave the free flowing river a test ride for the first time in 80 years.

By mid-February the entire river was reopened. One major benefit of the dam removal is that upstream floodplain adjoining the open river can now do its job better. And

next on the agenda? The District has in its sights on the concrete low rise Daniel Wright and Hollister Dams above and below Route 60. Although their removal is not imminent, it is at least somewhere in the not too distant future.



YCC Celebrates 30 years of Helping the Des Plaines River

It is not uncommon today for young people to be tuned into a screen nearly every waking hour of the day. With computers, television, smart phones, and other portable devices, it is a rare site to see young people working together constructively in natural settings with nothing but other enthusiastic students for company. This is exactly what anyone who visited the Lake County Forest Preserves saw this summer.

Youth Conservation Corps has sponsored summer work projects for high school students since 1981. Each summer, students work on environmental restoration projects across the Lake County Forest Preserve in small peer-led crews. This year, crews battled record rain fall, oppressive heat and high winds over the course of eight weeks as they worked together to complete their projects.

The achievements of this year's Corps have been remarkable! Some of highlights of the summer include:

- Crews installed horse mounting blocks along the Des Plaines River Trail.
- Native plants were reintroduced at Lake Carina and Sun Lake.
- Trails and fences were installed in McDonald Woods and Fox River Marina.
- Invasive species were cleared from Almond Marsh and Dougdale Pond.
- YCC summer program members and Youth Build members volunteered at the Des Plaines River clean up from Van Patten Woods to Gowe Park.



Youth Conservation Corps is proud to say that our programs have worked for the restoration and protection of the watershed and all of its natural areas for thirty years.

www.upperdesplainesriver.org

THANK YOU!

Partner Donors

Village of Lincolnshire
 Lake County Stormwater Management Commission
 Lake County Health Department, Lakes Management Unit
 Oakton Community College
 Hey & Associates
 Cowhey Gudmundson Leder, LTD.
 Liberty Prairie Conservancy, Steve Barg
 Lake County Forest Preserve District
 Des Plaines River Trailkeepers
 Conservation Design Forum, Steve Pescitelli



**THE HEALTH OF THE UPPER DES PLAINES
 RIVER DEPENDS ON US!
 THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT**

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 Rob Flood (Vice-President), North Shore Sanitary District
 Tom Ganfield (Secretary), Baxter/Woodman
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 Sheila Schultz (Director), Des Plaines Watershed Team

*Special thanks to retiring treasurer Nick Huber,
 Lake County Forest Preserve District*

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 Gary Paradoski, Applied Ecological Services
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Upper Des Plaines River Ecosystem Partnership

www.upperdesplainesriver.org

The Upper Des Plaines River Ecosystem Partnership is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Donations are tax deductible.



YOUR SUPPORT MATTERS

Membership contributions are vital to UDPREP's success. Join us now and receive a subscription to our newsletter River Talk, invitations to special events, and voting privileges at annual meetings.

Membership Levels:

Individual/Household \$30 Nonprofit Organization \$50

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Make checks payable to "UDPREP."
Mail membership form and check to:
Kathy Paap
Lake County Health Department
500 W. Winchester Rd., Libertyville, IL 60048

