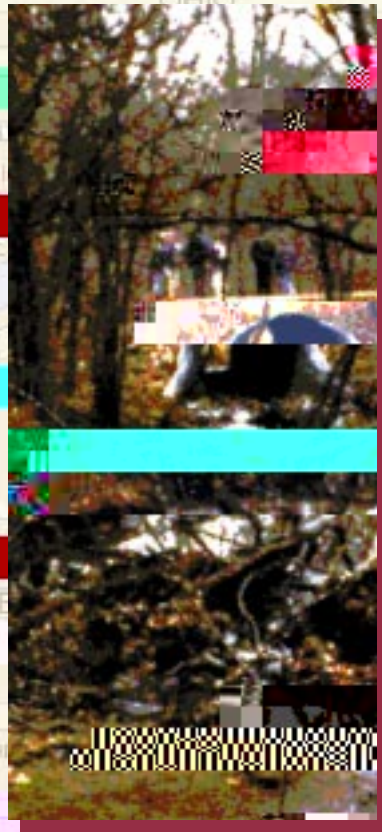


WHAT'S WORKING ON WORKING RIVERS:

A Handbook
for Improving
Urban Rivers



EXAMPLES
FROM
CHICAGO
AREA
RIVERS



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A Handbook for Improving Urban Rivers

EXAMPLES FROM CHICAGO AREA RIVERS

Text by
Naomi Cohn

Edited by
Gail Grosenick
Wink Hastings
National Park Service

*CHICAGO***Rivers** Demonstration Project

THE *CHICAGO Rivers* DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM

The Demonstration Program is a collaboration of public and private organizations enhancing Chicago Area Rivers through community-based activities, while serving as a national model for improving urban rivers. River enhancement projects—such as those described in this handbook—require the participation of all interests working toward common goals addressing environment, community needs, and sustainable growth. Through the ChicagoRivers Demonstration Project, a series of community-based public perception surveys were completed to identify desires for future river uses and an assessment of important natural resources to select specific areas and guide restoration activities. These studies were instrumental in the initiation and design of the projects summarized in this handbook.

CHICAGO Rivers Partners

Friends of the Chicago River

Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

National Park Service, Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Chicago District

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Chicago Metro Wetlands Office

USDA Forest Service, North Central Forest Experiment Station

This is a publication of the *CHICAGO Rivers* Demonstration Project, a collaborative effort directed by the Friends of the Chicago River and the National Park Service, Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program.



Friends of the Chicago River is the only non-profit organization dedicated solely to the protection and improvement of the Chicago River. The organization has become the single most influential voice for realizing the potential of the river's many resources. Since its inception in 1979, the Friends of the Chicago River has played a significant role in policy and planning for the promotion of public access and improvements to the river.



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, RIVERS, TRAILS, AND CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Conservation works at the local level. Citizens in thousands of grassroots groups are protecting places that are important to them: nearby rivers, open space for the community, and trails linking town and country. The Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program supports this grassroots movement as an important part of the National Park Service mission to protect America's natural and cultural resources. The National Park Service is increasingly being called upon to support the conservation efforts of landowners, community officials, and citizens who share the desire to protect or improve local resources.

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The National Park Service, Department of the Interior is an equal opportunity agency and offers all persons the benefits of participating in each of its programs and competing in all areas of employment regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, handicap, marital status, sexual orientation, or other non-merit factors.



HAT'S IN THIS HANDBOOK

Preface

Lots of initiative and hard work with a little know-how is all that's needed to improve the river in your community. 5

About Chicago Area Rivers

A brief history of Chicago's urban waterways and how community-based interest evolved into the restoration projects described in this handbook. 6

Things To Consider Before Getting Your Own Feet Wet...

Practical advice to guide river improvement activities anywhere...on any river! 8

Community Project Descriptions

Inspirational stories of community-driven river improvement activities. While the projects were all local in nature, the **Project Lessons** section of each description contains good advice to keep in mind for any river improvement project. Each project description also includes a section on **what was done** and **who was involved** with key contacts if you want to find out more about a specific project.

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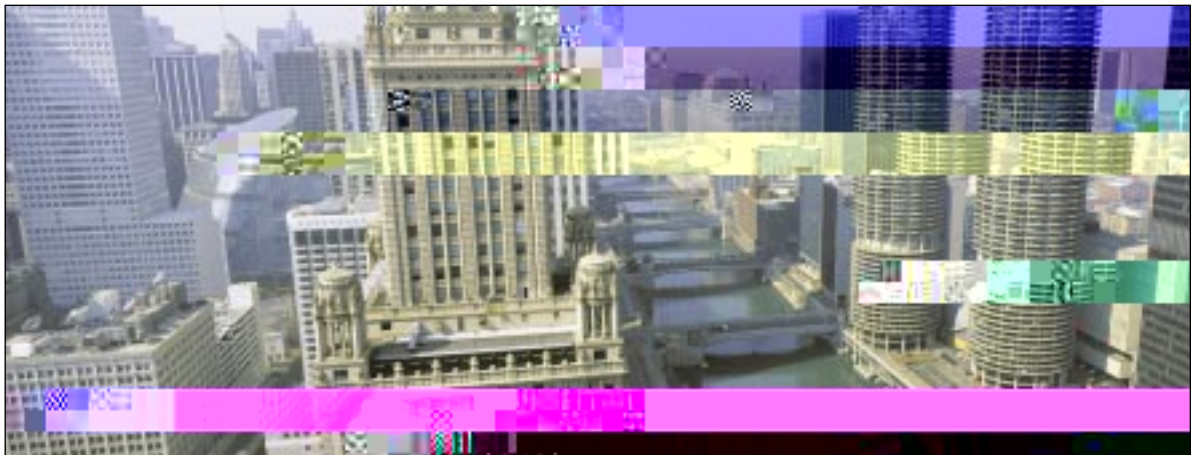
Resource References

Look in this section if you are in the Chicago area and want to get involved in river improvement activities. There are also listings, particularly under publications, videos and educational materials, that will be of interest to anyone concerned with river activities...anywhere. 34

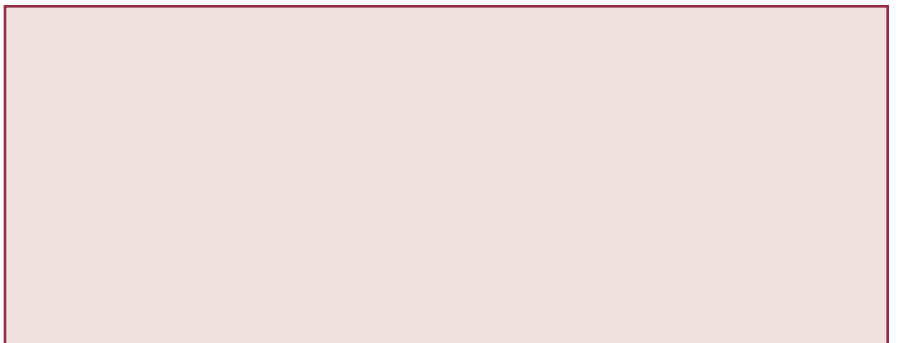


Courtesy of Friends of the Chicago River.

The river in your life may not be called the Chicago or “*Checagou*,” but chances are it has many “faces” like the Chicago, from natural ...to urban.



Photograph by Ron Schramm PHOTO.



The city of Chicago owes its existence to Chicago Area Rivers. Native Americans and early explorers alike saw that this gentle

the Mississippi River. The potential for this trade route quickly attracted thousands of settlers to the Chicago area.

Within a few short decades, as the city grew, Chicagoans changed the rivers and surrounding wetlands rapidly and dramatically. Two separate river systems—the Chicago and the Calumet—were combined into what became a single 156-mile network of waterways. Floodplains and wet areas—important natural components of healthy rivers—were filled

process. It can be as simple as taking a walk along the river with people who know the resources.

Be Inclusive

The importance of actively involv-