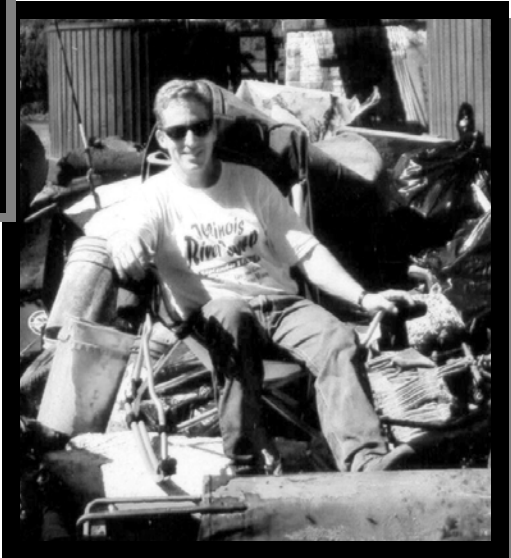
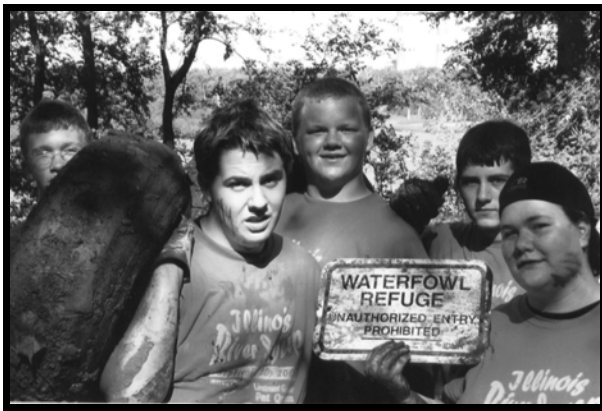


Starting from Here

Illinois River Sweep

sponsored by Friends of the Illinois River



An Information Booklet
For Illinois River Sweep
Organizers and Participants
www.friendsoftheillinoisriver.org

FRIENDS OF THE
illinois river





◆INTRODUCTION

In 2000, the Friends of the Illinois River, an independent, non-profit organization dedicated to conserving, enhancing and promoting the cultural and natural resources of the Illinois River and its watershed, began coordinating communities along the river to participate in **Illinois River Sweep**, a one-day cleanup to be held annually on the third Saturday of September. Every volunteer that participates receives an Illinois River Sweep t-shirt, plus glove and trash bags -- all provided by Friends of the Illinois River.

Local organizers, or River Sweep Captains, are needed in each community to help spread the word and recruit volunteers while Friends of the Illinois River raises funds from concerned donors. Funds raised for this project are used to provide the volunteers with gloves, trash bags, and t-shirts. Funds are also used for postage, banners, posters, and brochures. Throughout the project, the Friends of the Illinois River is be available to help answer questions and provide assistance to communities as they organize their annual cleanup.

Illinois River Sweep is modeled after the highly successful Ohio River Sweep. Today, the Ohio River Sweep is one of the largest environmental events in this country covering more than 2,300 miles of shoreline along the Ohio River and its tributaries. Many thanks to Jeanie Ison, Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission (ORSANCO) for sharing her Ohio River Sweep literature and organization knowledge.

This booklet, "*Starting from Here*", contains how-to information to serve as a guide to organizing a well-attended, safe, fun and effective cleanup. For more information or further assistance, contact the Friends of the Illinois River toll free at (866) 584-1310.


◆THE RIGHT PEOPLE

The first step in organizing a successful cleanup is to pull together the right people to play leadership roles in organizing and administering the many essential tasks. You will need to put together an Organizing Committee made up of people who are best equipped to supervise and plan in the areas of communications, transportation, safety, equipment, food service, public relations, advertising, media relations and recruitment of volunteers.

Your Organizing Committee should be as diverse as possible, yet every member should share a strong commitment to the project. Make sure that each member has a firm grasp of the responsibilities he or she will be expected to fulfill.

Look for leaders. Invite leaders from other civic groups and organizations, from the state department of natural resources or environmental protection agencies. Above all, get your local groups and clubs heavily involved. Let it be their event; you may be surprised at how many share concerns for the environment and how much effort they will put into the cleanup.

Don't neglect to consult with the administering agency (governmental or otherwise) for the site, which you plan to clean up. They may provide you with names of groups and individuals who are interested in the area and may be able to provide added assistance and expertise.



Organize your committee and appoint a Local River Sweep Captain as early as possible. The larger the project, the more time will be needed. Many organizations you will depend on for volunteers need to plan their schedules months in advance. Contact Friends of the Illinois River for information and to get your Captain and Community registered.

◆CHOOSING THE AREA TO CLEAN


Your Organizing Committee should consider the following when deciding on locations:

- Some parks and recreation areas are normally cleaned by park personnel or contract crews on a regular basis. You don't want to duplicate these efforts. Concentrate on littered areas not normally reached by regular crews.
- Your area should be of workable size. It is important that you be able to achieve a total cleanup in your available time and with available manpower. The site should be large enough to give all volunteers plenty of work to do.
- Make sure that all your efforts are pre-approved by the administering agency. Their staff may also be very helpful identifying good potential cleanup areas.
- Be aware of other scheduled activities at that site on the scheduled date i.e.- hunting, fishing, etc.



◆ SPONSORSHIP

The Friends of the Illinois River will be seeking corporate and individual sponsorships for Illinois River Sweep. These donated funds will cover the costs of planning and organizing as well as purchasing and shipping t-shirts, gloves, and trash bags to all participating communities prior to mid-September. The t-shirts for River Sweep volunteers will bear the names of these *major* sponsors. River Sweep Captains will need to contact the Friends of the Illinois to reserve the number of t-shirts needed.



It will be the responsibility of each Organizing Committee to contact local businesses or clubs, if they wish, to provide water and other refreshments for their volunteers. Don't forget that recognition should be given to these local businesses and clubs for their contributions.

If you have questions about sponsorship levels, or know of someone who would like to be a major sponsor, please contact the Friends of the Illinois River at (866) 584-1310.

◆ RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS


The Organizing Committee's direct contact and recruitment of volunteers is necessary to ensure a good turnout and an effective cleanup. Involve community leaders, civic organizations and the general population (particularly young people).

Ask your local Chamber of Commerce for its clubs and organizations roster. If you are trying to draw volunteers from beyond your own local community, you will want to contact state and regional offices of some groups.

National Guard, Military Reserve and U.S. Coast Guard units in your area should be contacted. These groups can be a good source of transportation and communications equipment for your cleanup day.

Examples of groups, which may be willing to help, are:

- Youth (*Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Campfire Girls, 4-H Clubs, FFA, church groups*)
- Service (*Lions, Rotary, Kiwanis*)
- Environmental (*Sierra, Isaac Walton League*)
- Social (*square dancers*)
- School (*PTA, Key Club*)
- Recreational (*horseback riders, bass and fishing clubs, canoe clubs*)
- Marinas (*yacht club members*)



All volunteers must register the day of River Sweep on the **Volunteer Sign-Up Sheet** and sign a **Release and Indemnification** form. Both forms will be provided to Captains when they register their community. Captains will retain the Release and Indemnification forms but mail in Volunteer Sign-Up Sheets after the event, to Friends of the Illinois River c/o Jo Skoglund, 11304 N. Prairie Rd, Lewistown, IL, 61542.



◆GETTING THE WORD OUT

Good publicity is essential for a successful cleanup. A good publicity program will reinforce the idea that everyone can do something to combat the problems of litter in our public areas.

Timing is important in creating a good publicity program. Start early and plan for your media publicity to peak just before the event. Suggest a press inspection tour prior to the event and take the press out on a boat and show them some of the designated areas to be cleaned. It is a great way to get advance publicity and a way to express the need for volunteers. Consider these suggestions for your publicity campaign:

Newspapers

Encourage coverage of your event by sending a series of news releases to all weekly and daily newspapers in the area of the cleanup. All releases should have the “who, what, where, when, and why” of the cleanup in the first paragraph. The releases should be interesting, well written and full of facts. Make sure that your releases are timely and submitted well before deadlines.

Make follow-up phone calls to the editors after releases have been sent out to make sure that they have been received. Offer assistance or set up interviews. You may want to make the newspaper a partner in sponsoring the event. Ask them to run Public Service Announcements (PSA), asking people to volunteer. After the event, submit news release with information on the amount of trash picked up, the number of volunteers who participated and other interesting facts.

Television

Send your news release material to the news department or the assignment editor of all television stations in your area. Place follow-up calls and provide interview opportunities for television coverage. Ask them to run public service spots (PSA) about your event. Local production companies may be willing to put together a PSA spot free of charge.

Radio

All radio stations in the area should receive the press release material as well as follow-up contacts and interview opportunities. A radio station may want to broadcast live from your site location on the day of the event.

Newsletters

Many civic organizations and businesses have weekly or monthly newsletters, which reach a wide readership. These newsletters should be in your list of contacts.

Speakers Bureau

Many groups need speakers for monthly meetings. Your Organizing Committee can effectively present the River Sweep message to these audiences, while also inviting them to become a part of your cleanup event -- or Friends of the Illinois can provide a speaker if needed.

Proclamations by Local City and County Government Officials



ILLINOIS RIVER SWEEP ORGANIZING COMMITTEE CHECKLIST

Before the Event

- Form an Organizing Committee Chairperson, select a Local River Sweep Captain, and notify Friends of the Illinois River
- Select site locations for cleanup
- Confer with site officials and others that will be involved
- Recruit other volunteers to help with planning
- Secure lists of organizations that might want to become involved
- Plan publicity and media events
- Arrange for trash disposal
- Plan for refreshments
- Select a main registration area for the day of the event
- Prepare and send press releases and public service announcements
- Arrange for first-aid personnel to be on hand
- Arrange for boats and other transportation
- Arrange and prepare for recycling
- Complete t-shirt order form
- Arrange for a photographer to take pictures of your cleanup

Day of the Event

- Welcome volunteers
- Each volunteer must register on the Volunteer Sign-Up Sheet and sign the Release & Indemnification form.
- Give volunteers instructions:
 - 1) who to contact in case of emergency
 - 2) what the ending time will be
 - 3) where the refreshments will be located, especially water
 - 4) where the restrooms are located
 - 5) show the overall project area
 - 6) assign volunteers to location(s) for clean up
 - 7) give volunteers other options in case they finish early
 - 8) tell volunteers where the collection point is for bagged litter
- Make sure all trash is disposed of properly
- Take plenty of pictures
- Thank volunteers**
- Mail Volunteer Sign-Up forms to Friends of the Illinois River, c/o Jo Skoglund, 11304 N. Prairie Rd, Lewistown, IL, 61542.**