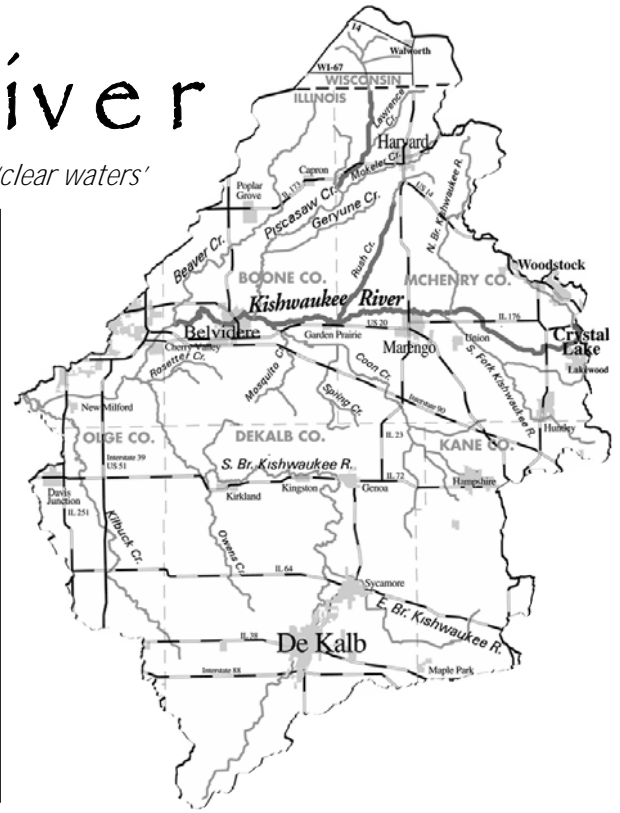


Your Watershed is..... Kishwaukee River

said to be the Native American name for the sycamore tree or meaning 'clear waters'

- Tributary to the Rock River, draining 1250 square miles in Illinois and Wisconsin, with nearly 1300 stream miles.
- A prairie stream- described by CW Rolfe in 1908 as 'The waters of this river are very clean compared to those of the Pecatonica...The entire river valley is low, undulating, semi-prairie country, more or less wooded.'
- 53 miles of Kishwaukee Mainstem are ranked "Class A Stream" due to the diversity of pollution sensitive fish found there.
- 101 square miles in the Mainstem corridor are designated by the IDNR Critical Trends Assessment as an Illinois Resource Rich Area.
- The Kishwaukee Mainstem, Rush Creek and Piskasaw Creek are rated biologically significant streams supporting a diversity of fish and mussels.
- Home to at least 28 plants and 30 animals listed as Illinois threatened or endangered species. The federally endangered prairie bush clover is found in the watershed as well as the state threatened river otter.
- Features over 3400 acres of riverfront parkland, especially in the gorge at the Rock River. A favorite spot for canoers.
- Today the Kishwaukee watershed landscape is approximately 71% cropland, 8 % developed and 21% open space.



The Kishwaukee River watershed is experiencing a growing economy and population like nowhere else in the state. Different areas of the watershed are facing different issues:

- In the far east and northwest areas of the watershed, rapid urbanization is a critical issue contributing to the degradation of streams through increased impervious cover and municipal sewage discharges.
- High quality streams such as Rush Creek, Piskasaw Creek and the North Branch of the Kishwaukee River are found in the north part of the watershed.
- The southern section of the watershed is mostly prime agricultural land that has been drained and maintained to enhance the productivity of the already rich land.
- The lower reaches of the watershed have a high percentage of protected open space and are home to the state endangered Osprey.

Critical Issues of the Kishwaukee Watershed

Development Towns in the Kishwaukee Watershed have a unique opportunity to grow differently using Watershed-Sensitive Development to protect the quality of the Kishwaukee River and to provide a better quality of life for all residents of the watershed.

Keys to Watershed-Sensitive Development---

Wetlands must be maintained as critical habitat, for their ability to store floodwaters and as buffers to the Kishwaukee River. Wetlands too must be buffered sufficiently to prevent their degradation from polluted runoff.

Open space must be incorporated into developments in order to supply land where rain and snow can naturally soak into the ground, replenishing our drinking water source and preventing increased runoff from overwhelming the Kishwaukee River and causing flooding and bank erosion. Natural areas also provide wildlife habitat and recreational space.

Paved surfaces should be minimized to retain the natural infiltration capacity of the land. Stormwater needs to be routed to vegetated swales where it can be naturally cleansed rather than being channeled directly as polluted runoff into the Kishwaukee and its tributaries from curbs, gutters and storm sewers.

Soil Erosion Erosion washes fine sediment into the streams of the Kishwaukee Watershed, smothering the habitat for endangered mussels and for aquatic insects which are the base of the river system's food chain.

Keys to Erosion Prevention---

Construction sites must use soil erosion control measures such as silt fences, mulching and rock dams, as required by ordinance and enforced by local governments.

Cropland practices, such as minimum tillage, grassed waterways, streamside filter strips and terraces, especially on high sloping land, are all practices which local Soil & Water Conservation Districts can help farmers establish. Federal farm conservation programs may be able to provide technical and cost share assistance.

Streambank stabilization of severely eroding streambanks is achieved by a variety of methods using vegetation and rocks. Contact USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service for help in analyzing streambank erosion problems and solutions.

Critical Issues (cont)...

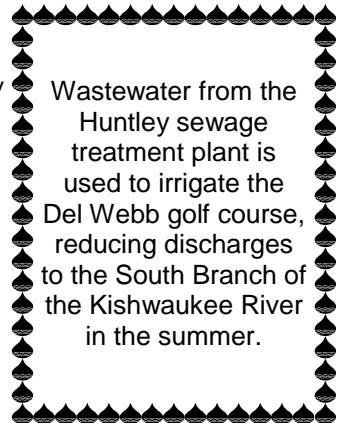
Waste Management Disposal of human and animal waste is of critical importance to the health of the Kishwaukee River and the enjoyment of its natural features.

Keys to Waste Management---

Municipal wastewater treatment becomes a key factor in water quality as the populations of the municipalities in the Kishwaukee River Watershed grow. Municipalities can maintain the water quality of Kishwaukee River by avoiding discharges to the river and its tributaries. This can be done through the promotion of water conservation by community residences and businesses and the use of treated wastewater to irrigate cropland, golf courses and other open space areas that have the proper soil and water table requirements. Besides reducing discharges, treatment plants can protect water quality by utilizing advanced treatment methods that remove ammonia and nutrients from effluent.

Septic systems must have proper placement and design to fit the soils, geology and hydrology of the watershed. Regular upkeep of septic systems is key to maintaining water quality.

Livestock waste must be kept from flowing into the Kishwaukee in order to maintain the river's high quality. This can be done through buffers along the river, fences to prevent livestock from entering the river, and the proper management of onsite livestock waste. Technical and costshare assistance is available to livestock owners in the watershed who wish to improve the management of livestock waste on their property. Contact your local Soil and Water Conservation District.



Wastewater from the Huntley sewage treatment plant is used to irrigate the Del Webb golf course, reducing discharges to the South Branch of the Kishwaukee River in the summer.

Resources

Boone County Conservation District, 603 North Appleton Rd, Belvidere, IL 61008, 815-547-7935, 815-547-7935 (fax), www.boonecountyconservationdistrict.org

Boone County Soil & Water Conservation District, 8108 Appleton Rd, Belvidere, IL 61008, 815-544-2655, 815-544-4281 (fax), www.booneswcd.org

DeKalb County Forest Preserve District, 110 East Sycamore St, Sycamore, IL 60178, 815-895-7191, www.dekalbcounty.org

DeKalb County Soil & Water Conservation District, 1350 W. Prairie Dr, Sycamore, IL 60178, 815-756-3237, 815-756-1132 (fax)

Friends of the Kishwaukee River/McHenry County Defenders, 124 Cass St, Suite 3, Woodstock, IL 60098, 815-338-0393, 815-338-0394 (fax) mcdef@owc.net, www.mcdef.org

McHenry County Soil & Water Conservation District, 1143 N. Seminary Ave, Woodstock, IL 60098, 815-338-0099, 815-338-7731 (fax), www.mchenryswcd.org

Natural Land Institute, 320 South Third St, Rockford, IL 61104, 815/964-6666, 815/964-6661 (fax), nli@aol.com, www.naturalland.org

Winnebago County Forest Preserve District, 5500 Northrock Dr, Rockford, IL 61103, 815-877-6100, 877-6124 (fax), wcfpd@wcfpd.org, www.wcfpd.org

The Kishwaukee River Ecosystem Partnership, a group of local conservation-minded groups and citizens, has undertaken an ambitious project to identify the issues critical to each of the 42 subwatersheds that drain to the Kishwaukee River. The product (due to be completed by 2004) will be the *Kishwaukee River Strategic Plan for Habitat Conservation and Restoration*. This Plan will include strategies for:

- **Protection for existing unprotected high quality areas,**
- **Restoration for areas that can be improved,**
- **Prevention where high quality areas are under threat, and**
- **Data Voids that need to be filled in order to better understand what is truly happening in a subwatershed.**

Contact the Kishwaukee River Ecosystem Partnership if you would like to participate in upcoming public meetings and receive a copy of the findings on the major issues in your Kishwaukee River subwatershed.



Kishwaukee River EcoSystem Partnership

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The Friends of the Kishwaukee River is a project of the McHenry County Defenders, a not-for-profit environmental organization working to preserve and protect the environment of McHenry County.



c/o McHenry County Defenders
124 Cass St., Suite 3
Woodstock, IL 60098
815-338-0393

Materials available at McHenry County Defenders:

- | | | | |
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| 9 | River Otter habitat classroom poster | 9 | A stuffed river otter display |
| 9 | Kishwaukee River watershed display board | 9 | Sustainable Development Guide for Kishwaukee Watershed Municipalities-update due out in 2004. |
| 9 | Kishwaukee watershed slide show with script | | |
| 9 | Enhancing a first class treasure...the Kishwaukee River- Technical & Financial Assistance Programs for Landowners (booklet) | 9 | Otter Tracks- newsletter of the Kishwaukee River watershed, State of the Kishwaukee River published each year |