

USRC Receives Ameren Illinois Grant

Catholic Heart Work Camp Lends a Hand

Mussel Survey Schedule Set

Illinois RiverWatch Open Lab Well Attended

River Runners June Float Trip Report

An Appeal From the USRC President



Recreation * Stewardship * Citizen Science

USRC Newsletter



Breaking News >>>

Citizen Science Team ID's 740 Bugs! Illinois RiverWatch Open Lab Well Attended

Eight USRC citizen scientists attended the Illinois RiverWatch Open Lab at the Izaak Walton Cabin at Lake of the Woods on July 6. With assistance from Illinois RiverWatch's Hannah Griffiths, the volunteers identified 740 macro-invertebrate that are used as indicators of stream quality. To determine stream quality rating, three indexes are used. One of the indexes includes Taxa Richness, which are the number of different kinds of bugs found. There are 37 possible indicators that are used. EPT Taxa Richness is also taken into account, which is the number of different Mayflies, Caddisflies and Stoneflies found in the samples. These are the good indicators of stream quality. Finally, the Macroinvertebrate Biotic Index (MBI) is calculated. This is the average taxa value of all the bugs found at a monitoring site. This year's results suggests that the small streams monitored are generally of poor quality, while the Sangamon River has ratings between good and excellent.



Catholic Heart Work Camp Lends a Hand with USRC Projects *Five Volunteers and a Chaperone*

Joe Niernberger leads CHWC volunteers through some very hot days

Catholic Heart Work Camp was a project originally started in Orlando, Florida in 1993 with 100 volunteers. It has grown to more than 10,000 volunteers over 50 different camps worldwide. The USRC was the beneficiary of 5 volunteers and their chaperone from the Champaign Camp based at St. Thomas More School. Their mission is in part "...to serve others as a way of life." "We were delighted to have the Catholic Heart Work Camp volunteers help us on June 15 and 16 with an Adopt-a-Highway clean-up that included the I-74 Interchange at Mahomet," said Joe Niernberger, the USRC's



Adopt-a-Highway and Invasive Species Removal Coordinator. "The effort resulted in 10 large bags of trash removed from our roadsides. Additionally, the workers gathered cut honeysuckle stumps at the Mahomet Greenway Park for later burning."

"The USRC would also like to extend gratitude to Mickey Nickrent from Our Lady of the Lake Catholic Church, and Christina Brown and Emily Polonus, both Champaign Catholic Heart Work Camp Managers for offering volunteers to the Upper Sangamon River Conservancy," said Joe. The CHWC volunteers worked through an especially oppressive week of heat and humidity while maintaining a positive outlook.



Feature Partnership Organization >>>

Ameren Illinois Awards USRC Grant

"...being a good environmental steward is important to the health and well-being of our community."

In May, Ameren Illinois announced that the Upper Sangamon River Conservancy was the recipient of an *Empowering Our Community Grant*. Ameren Illinois believes that recognition of charitable needs is a basic part of good corporate citizenship. That is why each year millions of dollars are donated from the Ameren Corporation Charitable Trust to support local organizations like the Upper Sangamon River Conservancy.



Qualifying groups are 501(c)3 organization that provide support to their communities, especially those with an emphasis on Environment, Youth and Education, Civic and Community, Health and Human Services, or Arts and Culture.



"At Ameren Illinois we know that being a good environmental steward is important to the health and well-being of our community," said Ron Juarez, Regional Director of Electric Operations for Ameren Illinois. "That is why we are happy to partner with Upper Sangamon River Conservancy to engage the community in the health and preservation of the Sangamon River."



USRC has been making a push this year through their *Bringing People to Nature* initiative, to create greater awareness of the wide variety of USRC opportunities in recreation, stewardship and citizen science. These opportunities are available to all; providing ordinary citizens, extra ordinary opportunities. Ameren's Empowering Our Community Grant will help to further the USRC's mission to "to preserve, maintain, monitor, and promote public use and awareness of the Sangamon River."



Breaking News >>>

Mussel Project Calendar



Heron View Forest Preserve
Meet at Museum of the Grand Prairie
950 N Lombard St, Mahomet
August 6, 9am – 3pm

Sangamon River Forest Preserve
2797 County Road 600 East, Fisher
August 13, 9am – 3pm

Shady Rest Park
Greenarch Lane, Monticello
August 14, 9am – 3pm

Lodge Park
1852 North Old Route 47, Monticello
August 20, 9am – 3pm

If you are interested in volunteering for one or more of the surveys or if you have questions about the them, please contact Bruce Colravy at citizenscience@sangamonriver.org.

Citizen Science Opportunity >>>

August Mussel Surveys: A Call for Volunteers

The USRC/Illinois RiverWatch joint mussel project title, *Freshwater Mussels of the Upper Sangamon River: Community Science in Action*, begins its second year of a 10-year study. Four surveys are scheduled for August, and volunteers are still needed. More than 100 volunteers answered the call last year. The purpose of the project is to illustrate how regular citizens, called community scientists or citizen scientists, can make an important contribution to the advancement of scientific knowledge. At the same time, volunteers are provided the opportunity to learn first hand about the



amazing diversity, and fascinating life history of freshwater mussels in the Sangamon River. The amateur malacologists will comb their hands through the substrate of the river searching for freshwater mussels. Once gathered, they will help to tag, identify, count, measure, weigh, and photograph the mussels before returning them to their river home. The USRC provides lunch for the volunteers.



USRC and Illinois RiverWatch have partners in research and education for this project that include Illinois Natural History Survey, Missouri Botanical Garden, St. Louis Zoo, and National Great Rivers Research and Education Center (NGRREC). Funding for the project has come from NGRREC, the Living Earth Collaborative, and the Consortium of Universities for the Advancement of Hydrologic Science, Inc. (CUAHSI). If you are interested in participating in this project, contact Bruce Colravy at citizenscience@sangamonriver.org.



Sangamon River Runners' June Float

An enjoyable trip In spite of a little rain

USRC's Sangamon River Runners' June float trip included seven boaters on an 'exploratory float trip' from the Sangamon River Forest Preserve near County Road 600 just south of Fisher down to Riverwood, Scott Hays' home on the river between the Hazen Bridge and Lake of the Woods. The trip was approximately five miles and was completed in just under 5 hours. As an exploratory trip, this was the first time this year the RiverRunners had floated this stretch from SRFP to the Hazen Bridge to monitor the float conditions.

Highlights of the trip included the Heronry at the new Heron View Forest Preserve, and the historic Hazen Bridge, a new acquisition by our Forest Preserve District with a promise of a new kayak launch site coming soon. For the botany-oriented, we spotted two large stands of climbing rose, possibly Illinois Rose (*Rosa setigera*) with a conservation value of 7, and dozens of halberd leaf rosemallow (*Hibiscus laevis*) along the river banks between the Sangamon River Forest Preserve and the Heron View Forest Preserve.



The river measured 5 feet 8 inches at the Fisher Gage (always available from the USRC website), which is an acceptable water level for a float trip. Participants encountered a few minor blockages that they worked through and one significant blockage requiring a portage at a horseshoe in the river near the west boundary of Heron View.

The weather forecast was iffy, with a 40% chance of a shower that afternoon and stronger storms forecast for Saturday evening. It was therefore no surprise when it started to drizzle about an hour in and never let up until the trip was finished. The boaters were soaked by the time they reached the takeout!

Nonetheless, all were happy to be on the river and they ended in excellent (if damp) spirits. You can join the River Runners on their next river trip coming soon! Watch the website for upcoming float trips.



Annual Fundraiser >>>

Duck Race 2022

The USRC will be holding its 12th Annual Duck Race Fundraiser this year. It began with a partnership between the USRC and Mahomet Parks & Rec in 2011. Starting this year, the USRC will be the sole operator and beneficiary of the race. The Duck Race has been our largest fundraiser since its beginning. Proceeds pay for many costs of our all-volunteer, not-for-profit, 501(c)3 organization as we strive to fulfill our mission: to preserve, maintain, monitor, and promote public use and awareness of the Sangamon River. Sponsorship of a rubber duck in the race is \$5.00 per chance. First Place is \$500.00 which has been generously donated by First Financial Bank.

Second place is a chance to win either a kayak and paddle, or \$250.00 cash. Third place is \$100.00 cash, and last place is a duck in next years race.

The ducks are dropped from the old Rt. 150 Iron Bridge at 6pm on August 27 during the Mahomet Music Festival. You do not have to be present to win, but then who doesn't want to see hundreds of rubber ducks cascade off of the old iron bridge. Chances to win can be purchased at various locations around Mahomet or online using the QR code below. We hope to see you at the race!



Become a Volunteer

To learn more about the many volunteer opportunities available at the USRC contact Mary Stech at volunteer@sangamonriver.org or visit our website at sangamonriver.org.

USRC Contacts

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Joe Niernberger, Secretary
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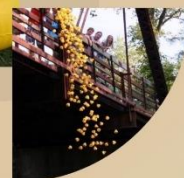
Scott Hays, River Runner Coordinator
riverrunners@sangamonriver.org

Bruce Colravy, Citizen Science Coordinator
citizenscience@sangamonriver.org

Michael Lambert, Webmaster
webmaster@sangamonriver.org

Sangamon River Duck Race

6:00 PM
August 27th, 2022
Old East Street Bridge
106 S. East Street
Mahomet, IL
Only \$5/duck



\$500 First Prize!
2nd - \$250 or kayak!
3rd - \$100!

Proceeds will support conservation and citizen science efforts for the Sangamon River.

Sponsor your duck now via the website

www.sangamonriver.org



An Appeal from the USRC President



Dear Friends,

We're about halfway through another year of working to preserve, maintain, monitor, and promote appropriate public use and awareness of the Sangamon River. We hope you were able to join us when we brought back the Sangamon River Showcase in May. We feel like it was our best event yet, and it gave us the chance to let people know what we're all about, including:

- Float trips that promote river awareness through recreation.
- Citizen-science which promotes river ecology and advocacy.
- Outreach which provides education opportunities.
- Clean-ups that remove unnatural debris from the Sangamon watershed.
- Cultural history through preservation opportunities.
- And much more.

While the Showcase may have been our biggest event of the year, we've got even more work lined up in the next six months as we (sometimes literally) dive in to our many activities.

Please consider supporting our efforts financially with a donation at whatever level you are able and willing to give. Contributions allow us to purchase watercraft for use by float trip participants free of charge, along with materials and equipment for water and wildlife monitoring efforts. Donations also allow us to provide food for volunteers helping with stewardship initiatives and to



maintain our current equipment. The USRC is a 501(c)3 tax-exempt organization and your donation is fully tax deductible.

The Sangamon River is one of our area's most beautiful yet fragile natural assets. By supporting the ongoing efforts of the Upper Sangamon River Conservancy, you have shown your appreciation for the Sangamon and support for the USRC's efforts. On behalf of the Upper Sangamon River Conservancy Board, I would like to sincerely thank you for considering a donation in support of our work.

Regards,
Michael Daab
USRC President
president@sangamonriver.org

Donations can be made using the QR code or mailing address below, or by visiting our website at sangamonriver.org.



PO Box 765,
Mahomet, IL 61853

Upper Sangamon
River Conservancy

newsletter@sangamonriver.org

www.sangamonriver.org



Upcoming Events >>>

2022 Summer Calendar

Invasive Species Removal

Mahomet Greenway Park

Thursday Workdays

9am – 11am

Sept. 1, 8, 15, 22, 29

Burn Days

10am – 1pm

Sept. 24

For Information Contact Joe Niernberger at
naturalareas@sangamonriver.org

Mussel Surveys

August 6, 13, 14, 20

9am – 3pm

Detailed Calendar on page 2 of this newsletter
For Information Contact Bruce Colravy at
citizenscience@sangamonriver.org

Annual Duck Race

Old 150 Bridge

August 27, 6pm

Purchase Duck Chances to support USRC
online at www.sangamonriver.org

Annual River Clean-Up

Lake of Woods Forest Preserve

Izaak Walton Cabin

Sept. 10, 9am – 3pm

Reservations Required

For reservations or for more information
contact Scott Hays at
riverrunners@sangamonriver.org