4th Annual Fox River Summit
Celebrating Success and Addressing Shared Challenges

Fox River Ecosystem Partnership
Fox River Ecosystem Partnership

- FREP was established in 1996
- FREP's territory is the entire Fox River watershed in Illinois
- At the time was one of 41 ecosystem partnerships in the state under the auspices of the IDNR—now only 2 or 3 remaining!
- Served historically as a conduit for State and Federal grants
Fox River Watershed Facts
In Illinois

- 1,720 square miles
- 130 miles in length
- 9 counties
- Over 90 communities
- Over 400 lakes
Overall Vision and Goal of FREP
As set forth back in 1996.

Our Vision for the Fox River watershed in Illinois is to balance all the uses and demands on our natural resources while preserving and enhancing a healthy environment.

Our Goal is to promote, preserve, protect and enhance the natural, cultural, economic and recreational resources of the Illinois Fox River and its watershed.
What is FREP?

- Not-for-profit group
- Funding is mostly membership based and some grant funding
- All are welcome: individuals, businesses, organizations, government entities, HOA, consultants
- One paid Communications Manager
- Executive Committee oversees activities
- Integrated Management Plan
Factors Impacting the Fox River Watershed

- Population Growth and Development
- Regulated Discharges
  - 160 NPDES permits
  - 55 WWTP on Fox and Tributaries in IL
- Water Supply
  - Over 300,000 people drink from Fox River
- Dams
  - 13 on Fox River in IL, 80+ on tributaries
- Wisconsin—what happens upstream
Collaborative, Inclusive Planning Process Established:
6 Major Areas of Concern Which Included:
Recreation, Habitat, Land Use, Water, Quality, Stormwater, Education

Developed 16 Critical Factors which led to 37 Detailed Recommendations for Action

Endorsed by many stakeholders
FREP Watershed Grants and Matches

FREP instrumental in bringing $$ to the watershed

Old IDNR C2000    $2,333,250
58 grants since 1996

EPA 319 Program    $9,500,000
47 NPS Pollution Control Grants since 1990
• Many Issues

• Changing Political Landscape

• Changing Funding

• But Many Accomplishments in 20 Years
Ongoing FREP Activities

- Bi-monthly FREP Noon Network programs featuring environmental projects throughout the watershed
- Bi-monthly membership meetings with program presentations
- Assisting CMAP with 9 lakes TMDL project
- Provided Watershed Planning assistance for subwatersheds
- Fox River Water Trail Initiative
Ongoing FREP Activities

- Represented on Fox River Study Group
  - Analagous to new Illinois Fox River Group in WI

- Screenings of the film DAMNATION

- Monthly *Downstream* e-newsletter

- Comprehensive website full of resources
  - Model ordinances, subwatershed plans, studies, activities and more
Subwatersheds with Completed Plans

- 9 Lakes Watershed
- Blackberry Creek *
- Ferson-Otter Creek *
- Fish Lake Drain Watershed
- Flint Creek Watershed *
- Jelkes Creek
- Nippersink Creek *
- Poplar Creek Watershed
- Sequoit Creek Watershed
- Silver & Sleepy Hollow Creek *
- Squaw Creek Watershed
- Tyler Creek Watershed *

Watersheds Currently Involved in Watershed Planning

- Boone-Dutch Creek Watershed
- Spring Creek Watershed
- Woods Creek Watershed
Today’s Major Issues for FREP at 20 Years!!

- Re-inventing ourselves to:
  - Stay relevant
  - Continue to improve watershed
  - Find new funding sources
  - Find new ways to reach watershed stakeholders

- Proposed Whitewater Recreation Facility on the Fox River
  - What are the impacts, costs??

- Keeping Subwatersheds Engaged

- Helping Communities Find More Sustainability
Jeff Mengler, FREP President  Jmengler@heyassoc.com

www.foxriverecosystem.org

And newly on Facebook facebook
• Born out of Chicago Wilderness
  – High priority for all resource managers
  – Needed help crossing borders
• Founded in 2010
• Wrote MOU and obtained 63 organizational signatories
• Hired a full-time coordinator
• Formed Steering Committee (act as Board)
• Secured 16 grants totalling $572,930.60
• Special thanks to USFS for large support in early years via Midewin
• Distributed small grants to partners totalling $26,045
• Housed at Chicago Botanic Garden
Prevention

Invasive Ornamental Plants
Education and Outreach
Goal – to reduce supply and demand!

• Workshops for Garden Clubs and Master Gardeners
• iLandscape Show and Chicago Flower & Garden Show
• Homeowner fact sheets (LCFPD)
Prevention

- Invasive Ornamental Symposium at Chicago Botanic Garden
- 84 attendees
- Connecting green industry and conservation
Audubon Toyota TogetherGreen Fellowship

- Build long term relationships with Hispanic community
- Translate Midwest Invasive Plant Network’s Landscape Alternatives brochure into Spanish
- Translate homeowner fact sheets into Spanish
- Host bilingual workshops and garlic mustard pulls
Prevention

Clean Boats Crew

- Chain O’Lakes and North Point Marina
- Diversey and Burnham Harbors
- Portage Public Marina and East Chicago Marina (IN)
- Total interactions: 3,519
Early Detection & Rapid Response

- IL Hydrilla Task Force
- New Invaders Watch Program
Early Detection & Rapid Response: IL Hydrilla Task Force

- Education and outreach materials
- Website
- Email reporting site
- Assessment and response protocols
Early Detection & Rapid Response: IL Hydrilla Task Force

- EDDR Plan Document
- Fact sheets for an additional 12 aquatic invasive plant species
- Memorandum of Understanding for Rapid Response Team
Early Detection & Rapid Response: New Invaders Watch Program

- Updated database for prioritizing control efforts
- Updated target list
- “Strike Team” in action
- Recruiting additional monitors
Chicagoland “Strike Team”
Coordinating Control and Management

• Japanese knotweed and stiltgrass in Downers Grove

• Wild chervil in Kane County
Partner control efforts

- DuPage County Forest Preserve District = 2,126 acres
- Fermilab Natural Areas = 1,500 acres
Illinois Invasive Plant Council

• NIIPP Conservation representative

• Provided risk assessment for various species – some of which will likely be added to Exotic Weed Act

• Help to promote alternatives to species that are not currently up for regulation
Garlic Mustard Challenge

5. DeKalb County FPD (150 lbs)
4. GreenCorps (630 lbs)
3. Fermilab (650 lbs)
2. FPCC (1,330 lbs)
1. Lake Forest Open Lands Association (1,440 lbs)
Summary 2010-2015

• Workshops, presentations, exhibit tables:
  – 167 reaching > 7,500 people
• Clean Boats Crew: almost 9000 exposures
• IL Hydrilla Hunt!: > 5,890 cards, 40 posters, 390 ID sheets; 9 negative reports
• Published articles, interviews, etc.: 110 with potential to reach more than 1 million people
• Control efforts by partners (yearly): > 5,000 acres
Putting it all in perspective  

2010 - 2011 

Goals:  
• name for organization  
• developing a logo  
• setting up website  
• submit applications to appropriate sources of funding  
• developing an identity as an organization
Putting it all in perspective

2014

• Now involved in State prevention and EDRR efforts Participating in State regulatory efforts
• Consistently on radar screen for federal funding
• Working consistently with green industry
• Working with target audiences we hadn’t anticipated – faith-based organizations and Hispanic community
• And the list goes on….

Illinois Hydrilla Task Force
2016 Perspective

- Full-time Coordinator Departed NIIPP (personal reasons)
- Lost Fiscal Sponsor and Host
- Finishing out Existing Grants with part-time personnel
- Seeking new host and fiscal sponsor
  - Many organizations interested, but unwilling to take it on.
- Searching to find Sustainability for NIIPP
NIIPP Steering Committee:
Debbie Maurer, Lake County Forest Preserve District, Chair
Jeff Mengler, Hey and Associates, Inc., Vice Chair
Trish Beckjord, Midwest Groundcovers
John Legge, The Nature Conservancy
Cindy Hedges, DuPage County Forest Preserve District
Delane Strohmeyer, Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie
Patrice Charlebois, IL-IN SeaGrant

www.NIIPP.net
Stay Relevant and Impactful
Find New Funding Sources
Organizationally Sustainable
New Ways to Get Message to Stakeholders
Continue Collaborative Work Across Borders
Reinvent Ourselves!!