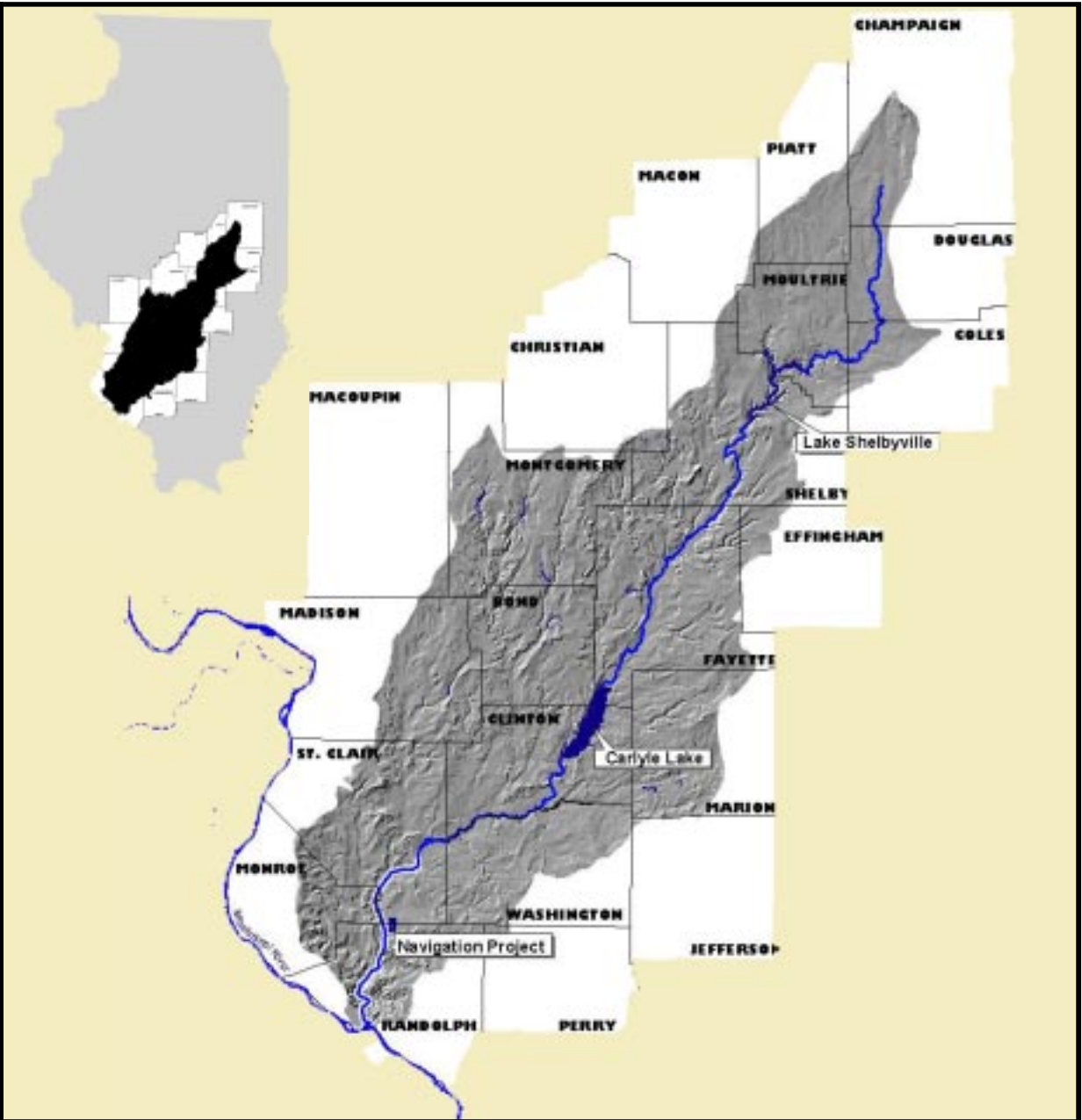


KASKASKIA RIVER WATERSHED

ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION & RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE



A cooperative effort to manage the watershed in a sustainable manner that will promote, but not abuse, the natural resources, and also encourage additional recreational opportunities, new economic development, implementation of sound agricultural practices and the restoration of natural ecosystems.



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ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

The Kaskaskia River Watershed Ecosystem Restoration & Resource Development Initiative is a collaborative effort between State and Federal Agencies, as well as a number of local/regional interests, including the Kaskaskia Watershed Association, that look to jointly manage the watershed in a manner that will accomplish the following:

- Restore, enhance and protect habitat for plants and wildlife
- Improve water quality throughout the watershed
- Enhance recreational opportunities on private, state and federal land
- Increase economic opportunities for agriculture and business communities
- Protect farmland and open space

This watershed once contained a diverse mixture of wetlands, bottomland hardwood forests, savannas and prairies. However, as settlement has occurred within the watershed, these features have slowly become fractured, and eventually, in some cases such as savannas, almost extinct. The original, free-flowing nature of the river has been significantly modified by the construction of two mainstream flood control reservoirs, Lake Shelbyville and Carlyle Lake. The lower segment of the river has also been modified to include a navigation channel to facilitate the shipment of grain, coal, steel and other commodity items.

These modifications strengthened the economic base within the region and significantly reduced flood damages on the lower sections of the river, as well as the lower Mississippi

River.

In implementing these modifications however, other issues have been raised, that need to now be addressed.

They Include:

- Quality fish and wildlife habitat has been reduced throughout the watershed, and unique ecosystems, such as prairies, savannas, and southern flatwoods are extremely rare.
- Sedimentation, from bank erosion, head cutting and agricultural runoff has severely impacted water quality throughout the watershed, and it must be reduced.
- Management of water quantity for business, recreation, public water supplies, navigation, flood control and environmental purposes is a growing concern.
- Additional recreational facilities, including access sites are needed throughout the watershed.
- A water management plan that is understood and supported by all interests needs to be developed.
- The Navigation Project's capacity has not been fully realized, and new initiatives and opportunities need to be created to increase its economic benefit.
- Large, contiguous blocks of bottomland hardwood forest need to be created and protected between Carlyle Lake and Fayetteville.



In combining various groups to form the Kaskaskia Watershed Association, individual stakeholders realize that the watershed is extremely diverse but that their issues are very similar: communication, erosion, siltation, recreation, fish and wildlife, flood damage reduction, water supply, industrial, navigation, economic development and ecosystems. Working together, the coalition will be better able to combine the resources of people, past investments, existing economics and programs to further their goals and objectives in enhancing and protecting this watershed.



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IMPLEMENTATION

The report, Kaskaskia River Watershed: An Ecosystem Approach to Issues and Opportunities, jointly commissioned by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and US Army Corps of Engineers, has recently been developed to fully document the current issues involved within the watershed. As an addendum to this report, a Work Plan has been developed that details in excess of 100 projects, from all reaches of the watershed, that have been fashioned to address the previously listed issues and opportunities.

This addendum is intended to be a living document, maintained by the Kaskaskia Watershed Association Inc., which will provide up-to-date information for legislators and agency personnel, to assist them in securing funding to implement listed projects. It is important that agency personnel, as well as legislators, understand that when developing programs, voluntary, incentive-based programs are necessary to be successfully implemented.



To date, a number of programs and other potential funding opportunities have been identified that will assist in the implementation of projects within the Kaskaskia River Watershed. They include:



- Environmental Quality Incentives Program
- Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)
- Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)
- Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP)
- Farmland Protection Program (FPP)
- Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)



- Urban and Rural non-point source concerns
- Stream bank stabilization
- Assistance with in-stream management and habitat restoration
- Watershed planning in education



- Partners for Fish & Wildlife Program
- Endangered Species Recovery Implementation Program
- Federal Activities Program
- Fisheries Resource Office Assistance
- Candidate Conservation Program
- Environmental Contaminants Program



- Removal, analysis transport and beneficial uses of sediment
- Long term resource monitoring
- Flood reduction, hydrological restoration and habitat restoration
- Recreational facilities



- C2000 Ecosystems Program
- Recreational Grant-in-Aid Programs:
- Open Land Trust (OLT)
- Open Space Land Acquisition and Development (OSLAD)
- Boating Access
- Bikeway & Federal Recreational Trails
- Forestry Assistance Programs



- USCOE – Planning Assistance to States
- IDOT – Illinois Transportation Enhancements Program
- IEPA – Clean Lakes Program
- IEPA – Lake Education Assistance Plan (LEAP)
- LEAM
- 1/10th cent Sales Tax for Natural Resources
- Local Legacy Program

KASKASKIA RIVER WATERSHED

ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION & RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

ISSUES

- The Kaskaskia River Watershed Basin, at 3,677,785 acres, represents 10.2% of the surface area of Illinois.
- Several types of ecosystems, necessary to support specific species of birds, animals and plants are severely reduced in size and quality. Those affected include:
 - Only 1,300 acres of High-quality Forest (five separate types) remain within the watershed. This is only .11% of the area that was forested at the time of settlement.
 - Only one acre of High-quality Savanna remains within the watershed.
 - Only 11 acres of High-quality Prairie remain in the watershed, .0005% of the original expanse.
 - Less than 700 acres of Wetlands are in high-quality condition, .1% of total wetland acreage.
 - Less than 1% of the watershed's stream segments are listed as Biologically Significant Streams.
- There are currently more requests for water use, (i.e. public water supplies, utilities, etc.) than there is water available.
- A total of 4.27 cubic million yards of sediment has been deposited within a 6-mile stretch of river (Fayetteville to New Athens) between 1972 and 1999. Sedimentation is also reducing backwater fish nursery sites, threatening the sport fishery industry.
- New, record flood elevations were established along many sections of this watershed in 2002, rendering recreational facilities unusable and severely impacting agricultural activities along the river.

BENEFITS

- The economic base will be stabilized throughout the many rural communities that are located within the watershed.
- Fish and wildlife habitat will be protected, enhanced, and restored in one of Illinois's most significant watersheds.
- Water quality within the watershed will be improved for both recreational and public water supply use.
- Reduced sedimentation throughout the watershed will lessen the future costs of maintaining the navigation channel.
- There will be a reduction in conflicts between the various interests within the watershed.



Document prepared by
SOUTHWESTERN ILLINOIS RC&D, INC.
www.swircd.org

for:
ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
KASKASKIA WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

graphic layout by H3 Studio, Inc.