

Resource Experts: Discussion of Issues Related to Key Recreation Opportunities

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SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

We conducted this study to identify the types and range of outdoor recreation and open space opportunities available in the Chicago River corridor and to learn more about how these opportunities relate to the physical and social characteristics of the resource. We turned to four major types of resource experts for this information: public land managers, non-profit recreation and environmental interest groups, commercial recreation providers, and commercial and industrial interests. In all, we conducted 38 formal and informal interviews with 55 people, representing 33 agencies, organizations, and companies. Principal questions addressed the current and projected supply of recreation and open space opportunities, issues and concerns related to current use and potential increased use for various activities, and recommendations for improving opportunities in the corridor. To help answer these questions, we supplemented the interviews with information from more than 100 secondary sources.

PROFILES OF RESOURCE EXPERTS

Three major sets of findings are presented. The first is a profile of the principal groups active in the corridor, focusing on the major public land holders, but also describing other important agencies, groups, and companies. Findings here show a long history of public agency activity in open space protection and recreation development in the corridor, an increasing concern for the ecological management of land holdings, and an optimistic outlook for increased open space acquisition and recreational access to lands. Diverse private not-for-profit groups also have an interest in the corridor, including conservation, recreation, historic preservation, and economic development concerns. These groups help plan for the corridor, provide recreation opportunities, and assist in land and water management on public lands. Partnerships between public agencies and not-for-profits are becoming increasingly important as agencies expand their management responsibilities with limited funding. The private sector's role in providing recreation opportunities has long been established in the corridor through marinas and other boating-oriented businesses. With recent improvements in water quality, this role has focused more directly on the river corridor rather than solely on Lake Michigan or other water bodies in the region. Three types of commercial and industrial interests

are also found along the river: 1) Real estate companies interested in developing vacant industrial properties for commercial and residential uses. In both downtown Chicago and in suburban reaches of the corridor, developers are generally aware of the public value of the river edge and willing to work with public agencies to provide public access and amenities. 2) Businesses that see their riverfront as more than a functional asset and are amenable to aesthetic and/or recreational improvement of their properties. This may include landscaping the shoreline and providing some type of access to their employees and/or the public. 3) Businesses that do not see their riverfront as more than a functional asset and are concerned that recreational use by employees or the public would be unsafe or undesirable because of possible theft, vandalism, and/or liability.

CURRENT AND POTENTIAL RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

The second set of findings is a reach-by-reach description of the current and potential supply of recreation and open space opportunities. Information is provided in tabular and map form. Discussion highlights four major activity types: boating, fishing, trails, and natural and cultural resource-based recreation and education. Our findings show a wealth of opportunities now available in the corridor, with plans for future increases (Table 4.1).

ISSUES RELATED TO RECREATION USES

The third set of findings presented here discuss the salient issues related to recreational use of the corridor for boating, fishing, trails, and natural and cultural resource-based recreation and education. We organized interview information and secondary data sources under the following topics: historical background, current uses, opportunities and constraints to use, prospects and implications of increased use, and recommendations by interviewees for improving recreation and open space opportunities. Findings show that although problems do exist and could increase as the corridor becomes more popular for recreation, resource experts were mostly enthusiastic about the potential of the Chicago River to supply quality recreation and open space opportunities for the metropolitan area. Major concerns and

TABLE 4.1
Summary of current and potential recreation and open space opportunities

REACH 1: WEST FORK OF THE NORTH BRANCH	
• Description:	14 miles; narrow, shallow, and channelized; mostly residential land use with significant open and forested areas
• Boating:	Marginal; lower part navigable by canoe/kayak with adequate flow
• Fishing:	Little activity; bass and panfish but not a large fishery
• Trails:	Planned 12-mile Techny Trail with links to North Branch Bicycle Trail
• Nature/Culture:	70-acre Somme Prairie Nature Preserve and restoration site
• Other:	4 parks, 1 forest preserve picnic grove, 4 golf courses
REACH 2: MIDDLE FORK OF THE NORTH BRANCH	
• Description:	24 miles; upper stretch shallow/wetlands, channelized, mixed land use of residential, farm, and diverse open space ecosystems
• Boating:	Marginal except for lower 3+ miles for canoe and kayak
• Fishing:	Little activity but good potential in lower part for pike, bass, panfish
• Trails:	Developed trails, footpaths, and part of the North Branch Bicycle Trail; proposed link of Lake County forest preserve sites with nature trail
• Nature/Culture:	Middle Fork Savanna natural area, restoration sites in Cook and Lake County forest preserves
• Other:	2 municipal parks, 7 forest preserve picnic groves, 4 golf courses
REACH 3: EAST FORK OF THE NORTH BRANCH (SKOKIE RIVER)	
• Description:	17 miles; headwater wetlands/shallow-channelized upper reach; Skokie Lagoons includes 7 pools/190 acres of water; below, river is wider and navigable; land use is residential, forest preserve, and golf courses
• Boating:	Excellent and popular canoeing, boating (electric motors allowed), and sailing in Lagoons (7-mile round trip); canoe/kayak below Lagoons
• Fishing:	Recently restocked Skokie Lagoons popular for bass, catfish, walleye, and panfish; little fishing below Lagoons and marginal fishery above except for fishing ponds at Greenbelt Forest Preserve
• Trails:	5-mile multi-use trail at Lake County Greenbelt preserve; planned nature trails through Lake County conservancy sites; North Branch Bicycle Trail, hiking and horse trails through Cook County forest preserves
• Nature/Culture:	Several restoration sites in Lake & Cook County; Lagoons popular nature area
• Other:	4 municipal parks, 5 forest preserve picnic areas, 12 golf courses
REACH 4: NORTH SHORE CHANNEL	
• Description:	17.5 miles; straight, human-created channel, 8' deep, 150' wide; owned by Metropolitan Water Reclamation District—leased mostly as open space
• Boating:	Navigable by motorboat and canoe in its entirety; no outlet to Lake
• Fishing:	Little activity; fishery is limited but improving
• Trails:	7 miles of discontinuous bike trail segments with plans to link them
• Nature/Culture:	Ladd Arboretum/Evanston Ecology Center; birding increasingly popular
• Other:	Several community parks, mostly passive use; 1 golf course
REACH 5: NORTH BRANCH	
• Description:	17 miles; upper reach is winding, primarily natural forest preserves and parks; lower is channelized, deeper and wider, and industrialized
• Boating:	Upper reach navigable by canoe and kayak; lower reach by motorboat
• Fishing:	River Park dam popular for bullhead, carp; little activity otherwise
• Trails:	North Branch Bicycle Trail on upper reach; proposed linkage of trails in Chicago parks w/North Branch Riverwalk; partial Chicago Riverwalk
• Nature/Culture:	Numerous forest preserve restoration sites
• Other:	11 picnic groves, 12 public parks, several private parks, 3 golf courses

TABLE 4.1 (Continued)
Summary of current and potential recreation and open space opportunities

REACH 6: CHICAGO RIVER—MAIN STEM	
• Description:	1.4 miles; wide, deep, mostly high-rise commercial and riverwalk uses
• Boating:	Popular motorboating, rowing club, excursion boats; some industrial use
• Fishing:	Increasingly popular; bass and seasonal runs
• Trails:	Chicago Riverwalk is partially completed and discontinuous
• Nature/Culture:	Many historic and contemporary cultural sites; seasonal bird migrations
• Other:	Riverside cafes, public parks and plazas, interim use golf course
REACH 7: SOUTH BRANCH AND BUBBLY CREEK	
• Description:	4 miles (+ Bubbly Creek 1 mile); wide, deep; commercial/industrial use
• Boating:	Popular motorboating, rowing, excursion boats in downtown area
• Fishing:	Limited; some fishing (bass, carp) in turning basin and Bubbly Creek
• Trails:	Chicago Riverwalk proposed connection to Chinatown, points south
• Nature/Culture:	Many historic buildings and bridges; some vacant industrial wildlands
• Other:	Planned 12-acre park in Chinatown
REACHES 8 & 9: CHICAGO SANITARY AND SHIP CANAL	
• Description:	30 miles; straight channel for wastewater and transportation created by Metropolitan Water Reclamation District; industry and open space
• Boating:	Increasingly used for recreational motorboating, but heavy barge traffic
• Fishing:	Limited in channel; some good fishing in adjacent ponds and quarries
• Trails:	9 mile I&M Canal Bike Trail, 3 mile Lockport Historic Trail; planned 20 mile Centennial Trail with linkages to existing and planned trails running the length of the reach. Developed trail network in Palos forest preserve
• Nature/Culture:	Significant natural areas and restoration sites in Cook, Will, and Du Page Co. forest preserves; environmental education centers; historic canal towns Lemont and Lockport, Great Lakes-Mississippi portage site
• Other:	10 forest preserve picnic groves, 2 parks, 4 golf courses, tourism
REACH 10: CALUMET RIVER, LITTLE CALUMET RIVER, AND CALUMET-SAG CHANNEL	
• Description:	30 miles; wide and deep; channelized and partly human-created; largely industrial with some significant stretches of forest preserve and wetlands
• Boating:	Numerous marinas in eastern half; increasingly popular for recreation motorboating but heavy barge traffic
• Fishing:	Limited in channel, but increasing; good fishing in adjacent ponds
• Trails:	Presently limited except for Palos Forest Preserve network and Lake Katherine Nature Center; plans for trails running length of reach with links to existing/proposed systems
• Nature/Culture:	Several Palos area restoration sites and natural areas; exceptional wetlands, birding around Lake Calumet; nature centers
• Other:	8 forest preserve picnic groves, 6 parks, 3 golf courses

interviewee recommendations are summarized in Table 4.2 for the principal activities we covered.

The Chicago River corridor is at a turning point in recreational use and open space development; planning and management decisions made in the next few years will determine how use and development of these opportunities can be encouraged and merged with other corridor values.

This chapter identifies use, resources, concerns, and issues from across the corridor, and it documents perspectives from the past, present, and proposed future. Along with findings from the companion studies in the ChicagoRivers project, this information can help guide efforts to ensure a broad spectrum of recreation and open space opportunities in the corridor.

TABLE 4.2
Summary of interviewee concerns/recommendations for primary corridor activities

BOATING

Interviewee Concerns:

- Poor access to most reaches
- Once on the river (especially downtown), there are few destinations for power boaters
- Vertical walls of waterway make it difficult for small craft operators to get out of river in emergency
- Conflicts between paddle boats and power boats
- Conflicts between recreational boats and commercial boats
- Concern about the continued livelihood of commercial carriers if their river use is restricted
- Lack of boating regulation and enforcement; intoxicated recreational boaters
- Potential increases in crowding, conflict, and safety problems as boating increases in popularity

Interviewee Recommendations:

- Develop canoe trails at appropriate locations along the waterway
- Encourage development of private marinas and public boat landings where needed
- Encourage development of boat-oriented commercial and amenity attractions
- Install ladders along the vertical river walls downtown for emergency use
- Create activities and facilities to draw boaters to little-used stretches of the corridor
- Expand and publicize boater safety training courses
- Expand the current staffing of waterway enforcement for boating
- Establish a river authority to coordinate planning and regulation of river boating use
- Expand boat tour programs to other reaches besides downtown

FISHING

Interviewee Concerns:

- Poor fishing access to river from public land
- Increasing closure of fishing access from private property
- Questions about the safety of fish consumption
- Need to sustain recreational fishery under increased fishing pressure
- Potential for increased use conflicts as fishing increases in popularity

Interviewee Recommendations:

- Incorporate fishing and other shore-oriented activities into new park development
- Develop new management and regulatory frameworks for evolving urban fisheries
- Identify and examine new opportunities for fishing
- Expand public fisheries management programs
- Expand work with volunteer groups to improve recreational fishing programs

TRAILS

Interviewee Concerns:

- Limited public access to the waterfront
- Current network of trails is fragmented
- High weekend use levels on North Branch Bicycle Trail
- New trail development may not be popular with adjacent neighbors
- Inappropriate/high use levels could harm the natural environment near the trails

Interviewee Recommendations:

- Aim for a continuous, linked network of trails
- Aim for diversity in the trail system
- Aim for an appropriate level of trail development
- Phase in new trail development in conjunction with urban redevelopment projects
- Develop coordinated signage for trails

RESOURCE-BASED RECREATION AND EDUCATION

Interviewee Concerns:

- Poorly planned corridor development could impact cultural-natural environmental quality
- Inappropriate and high levels of use of natural areas by trail riders (e.g., equestrians, mountain bicyclists) could harm restoration projects or rare plant communities
- High levels of use of natural areas by nature enthusiasts might also degrade the environment

Interviewee Recommendations:

- Enhance existing river properties for natural and wildlife benefits
- Expand existing programs and facilities oriented toward natural and cultural resource education
- Expand volunteer stewardship activities in the corridor and increase attention to the river proper, e.g., shoreline vegetation restoration and in-stream cleanup and monitoring

PART I

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

Chapters 2 and 3 provided insights into two major groups who use the Chicago River corridor: nearby neighborhood residents and on-site recreational users. By studying how these groups perceived and used the river and how they would like to see it enhanced for recreation, we were able to understand the current and future *demand* for recreation opportunities. To provide realistic strategies for river planning, design, and management, however, we must also have an idea of the current and potential *supply* of opportunities. The information needed to complete the picture of demand and supply is presented in this chapter, which reports on a study of Chicago River resource experts.

The purpose of this study was to understand what types and range of recreation opportunities are available along the river and how these activities relate to physical and social characteristics of the resource. Specific study objectives were:

1. To identify key and representative groups and individuals who influence the recreational use of the corridor, and describe their impacts on current and future opportunities;
2. To obtain information about the current supply of recreation opportunities, as well as plans for future development of land and water resources for recreation and related values;
3. To summarize the perceptions of these key groups and individuals on current recreation use-related issues and the prospects for increasing and/or enhancing recreational use;
4. To suggest how study findings might be used to develop planning, design, and management strategies for the river corridor.

STUDY METHODS

IDENTIFICATION OF RESOURCE EXPERTS

We defined resource experts as those individuals who, because of their own interests and experience or as representatives of an agency, organization, or business, could provide key information relating to the study objectives. With the assistance of ChicagoRivers project staff from the Friends of the Chicago River and the National Park Service, we developed a preliminary list of resource experts to include in the study. Four major groups of resource experts were identified: public land managers, non-profit recreation and environmental interest groups, private commercial recreation providers, and commercial and industrial land and water interests.

From these broad categories, we began to select specific agencies, organizations, and businesses that were prominent in the corridor. Many of these choices were obvious; for example, major public land holders in the corridor include the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago, the Forest Preserve District of Cook County, Lake County Forest Preserves, and the Chicago Park District. In other cases, where there were many agencies, groups, or companies to select from, we chose those that had key projects or issues of special importance or that otherwise represented the interests of the wider population. Finally, we identified individuals within each agency, group, and company with whom we could schedule a formal, face-to-face interview. If we did not already know the appropriate individuals to interview, we asked to interview those most closely involved in activities related to the Chicago River corridor, whether land or business management, property leasing or development, or regulation and enforcement.

We conducted 27 formal interviews with 44 people, representing 25 agencies, organizations, and companies. We also contacted several additional individuals and groups to fill in the gaps on topics that had not been sufficiently covered through the formal interview process. These informal interviews were usually targeted toward specific information needs about current facilities, programs, and activities. Groups formally and informally interviewed are listed in Table 4.3; the names and titles of specific contacts are listed in the Information Sources section at the end of this chapter.

INTERVIEW DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Based on the study objectives, we developed an outline of questions to guide the formal interviews. This outline included three basic sets of questions aimed at profiling the groups interviewed and obtaining specific information about current use and perceptions. These questions were modified for each of the four group types we interviewed; some questions were emphasized or de-emphasized and others were added or deleted as appropriate. Copies of the outlines can be found in Appendix 4.1.

To characterize resource experts (Objective 1), all interviews began with a set of introductory questions to help profile the agency, organization, or company as well as to understand the position and role of the individual(s) being interviewed. For public land managers, this section solicited specific information on land holdings in the corridor and on activities, policies, and programs for managing that land for recreation and other uses. For commercial and industrial interests, this section focused on how companies used and managed the riverfront area where they were located. For commercial recreation and non-profit groups, this section included questions about their customers or members and the programs and services the groups provide.

The next major part of the interview focused on the supply of current and potential recreation opportunities (Objective 2). The interview included questions about existing sites and facilities and about plans for future development of land and

TABLE 4.3
Groups and individuals interviewed

Group	Interviews	
	n interviews	n people
PUBLIC LAND MANAGERS	16	20
Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago	1	3
Forest Preserve District of Cook County	3	5
Lake County Forest Preserves	1	1
Chicago Park District	2	2
Village of Glenview	1	1
City of Evanston Parks and Recreation	1	1
Village of Palos Heights	1	1
Informal interviews	6	6
NON-PROFIT GROUPS	8	8
Friends of the Chicago River and Cook County Clean Streams Committee	1	1
North Branch Restoration Project	1	1
Chicago Audubon Society	1	1
Chicago River Aquatic Center	1	1
Chicago Riverwalk Corporation	1	1
Informal interviews	3	3
PRIVATE COMMERCIAL RECREATION PROVIDERS	5	9
Wendela Sightseeing Boats	1	1
Chicagoland Canoe Base, Inc.	1	3
Marina City Marina	1	1
Windjammer Enterprises (marina)	1	3
North Pier Chicago	1	1
COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL INTERESTS	7	15
CSX Real Property, Inc.	1	1
Tribune Properties, Inc.	1	2
Commonwealth Edison Co.	1	2
Chicago Union Station Co.	1	2
Illinois River Carriers Association ¹	1	6
Farley Candy Co.	1	1
Informal interviews	1	1
MISCELLANEOUS	2	3
Chicago Police Dept.—Marine Unit	1	2
Informal interviews	1	1
TOTAL	38	55

¹This was a group interview with six principal participants.

water resources for recreation and related values. This discussion was quite detailed for some of the public land managers who oversaw many acres of river corridor. For commercial and industrial interests, the section was oriented toward public access to and use of their property; for those groups that did not allow access, this section of the interview was very brief.

The final portion of the interview focused on issues related to recreational use of the corridor (Objective 3). The interview here included questions about resource experts' and/or their constituents' perceptions of river recreation problems and opportunities and their prospects and recommendations for increasing and/or improving recreational use. Again, for those who were closely involved in providing recreation opportunities, this part of the interview was quite involved, but for others it was brief.

INTERVIEW PROCEDURES

Both principal investigators were present during the first 10 interviews, which covered each of the group types. Interview outlines were discussed after each interview and were improved for succeeding interviews. When we were comfortable with the outline and routine, we split up to be more efficient in our use of time.

The actual interviews ranged between 20 minutes and 2 hours in length. The shortest interviews were with individuals from companies that had little recreational interest in the corridor, and the longest were with public land managers that had major property holdings, recreational facilities, and programs. All 27 formal interviews were tape recorded, except in two cases where interviewees requested otherwise (and one where the recorder's batteries failed), and notes were taken to emphasize key points. Where no tape was available, we wrote summaries of the interviews immediately afterwards.

Informal interviews were conducted mostly by phone and ranged from short inquiries on specific topics to hour-long interviews. These were not tape recorded, but comprehensive notes were taken and summaries were written up immediately after the interviews.

SECONDARY DATA SOURCES

Although our interviews supplied the primary information needed to address study objectives, some data we required were more effectively obtained through secondary sources. Specifically, these data included statistics on land holdings, programs, facilities, and related information. This information was compiled from more than 100 maps, brochures, plans, reports, newsletters, newspaper articles, and scientific and popular papers. It was used in conjunction with the interview data to profile groups and to understand the current and potential supplies of recreation opportunities. A full listing of secondary data sources can be found at the end of this chapter.

ANALYSIS OF DATA AND PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

Our data collection efforts resulted in 320 pages of interview transcripts, over 100 pages of interview notes, and thousands

of pages of published documents. The following strategy was used to analyze and present our study findings:

To characterize resource experts (Objective 1), we developed profiles for each of the groups we interviewed formally. The most detailed of these were the major land management agencies, but each profile included a summary of the group's background, its land management activities (if any), and key current and proposed programs, policies, and plans aimed at recreation in the corridor. This information provides a context for examining questions about recreation perception and use, and forms Part II of this chapter.

To address the supply of recreation opportunities (Objective 2), we compiled information about current and potential recreation and open space opportunities on a reach-by-reach basis. For existing opportunities, we relied heavily on secondary data sources, particularly maps and land and facility inventories provided by the major public agencies in the corridor. The Map of Greenway Opportunities compiled by the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission and Openlands Project for their 1992 Northeastern Illinois Regional Greenways Plan was especially useful in this respect which indicated locations of existing public land, proposed greenways, existing and proposed trails, and designated Illinois Nature Preserves and Natural Area Inventory sites. For proposed opportunities, we relied on planning documents and information obtained through our interviews with resource experts. For each reach, we first described the landscape, land use, and channel characteristics present. Secondly, current and potential recreation and open space opportunities were identified and listed in tables that describe each site, the municipality in which it is located and its owner, and characteristics of the site such as acreage (when available), facilities, use or purpose, and public access. Sites listed in the tables were keyed to maps showing their location within the reach. Finally, principal land and water recreation opportunities were summarized for the reach. These opportunities were grouped into five main activity categories: boating, fishing, trails, natural and cultural resource-based recreation and education, and "other" recreation opportunities such as picnicking and golfing. These findings are presented in Part III.

To address the important issues related to recreation in the corridor (Objective 3), we synthesized information on current and potential recreation opportunities from Objective 2 to show what was happening over the entire corridor. Interview and secondary data sources were used to provide a historical context for understanding present and future use. We used the same five activity groupings for this synthesis, but detailed results by specific activities:

Recreational boating

1. Canoeing and kayaking
2. Rowing
3. Motorboating
4. Excursion boating

Fishing (no further breakdowns)

Trails

1. Foot paths
2. Developed trails (unpaved—horse, hiking)
3. Multiple-use bicycle-grade trails (paved)

Resource-based recreation and education

1. Natural and cultural resource appreciation
2. Education
3. Volunteer stewardship
4. Consumptive nature activities (e.g., hunting, foraging)

Other activities

1. Picnicking and related passive uses
2. Active sports
3. Golfing

This activity differentiation was also a good way to identify and address key problems and opportunities, as well as prospects and recommendations for increased recreation use. For many of the resource experts we interviewed, perceptions of such issues as safety, access, use conflict, and potential for increased use hinged on whether recreation was land or water based, motorized or non-motorized, active or passive, and so forth. Using the activity focus, we re-ordered each transcript and set of notes to combine all comments related to a given activity category. Within these activity categories, we then re-ordered comments by topics of current use, problems and opportunities, prospects for increased use, and recommendations. Relevant interview comments were summarized and illustrative quotes were included for each topic area. Findings for this objective are presented in Part IV.

Finally, in Part V we draw conclusions for developing planning, design, and management strategies for the river corridor.

PART II PROFILES OF RESOURCE EXPERTS

PUBLIC LAND MANAGERS

METROPOLITAN WATER RECLAMATION DISTRICT OF GREATER CHICAGO

AGENCY BACKGROUND

The Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) is a regional government agency charged with the primary responsibility for wastewater management. The district includes 125 member communities in a planning area of more than 870 square miles (primarily in Cook County) and serves more than 5 million residents. The MWRD owns more than 8,000 acres of waterway property, primarily along Reaches 4, 8, 9, and 10 (see Figure 4.1). Much of this property is highly contiguous, and it is leased to private and public entities for various water-dependent and non-water-dependent uses.

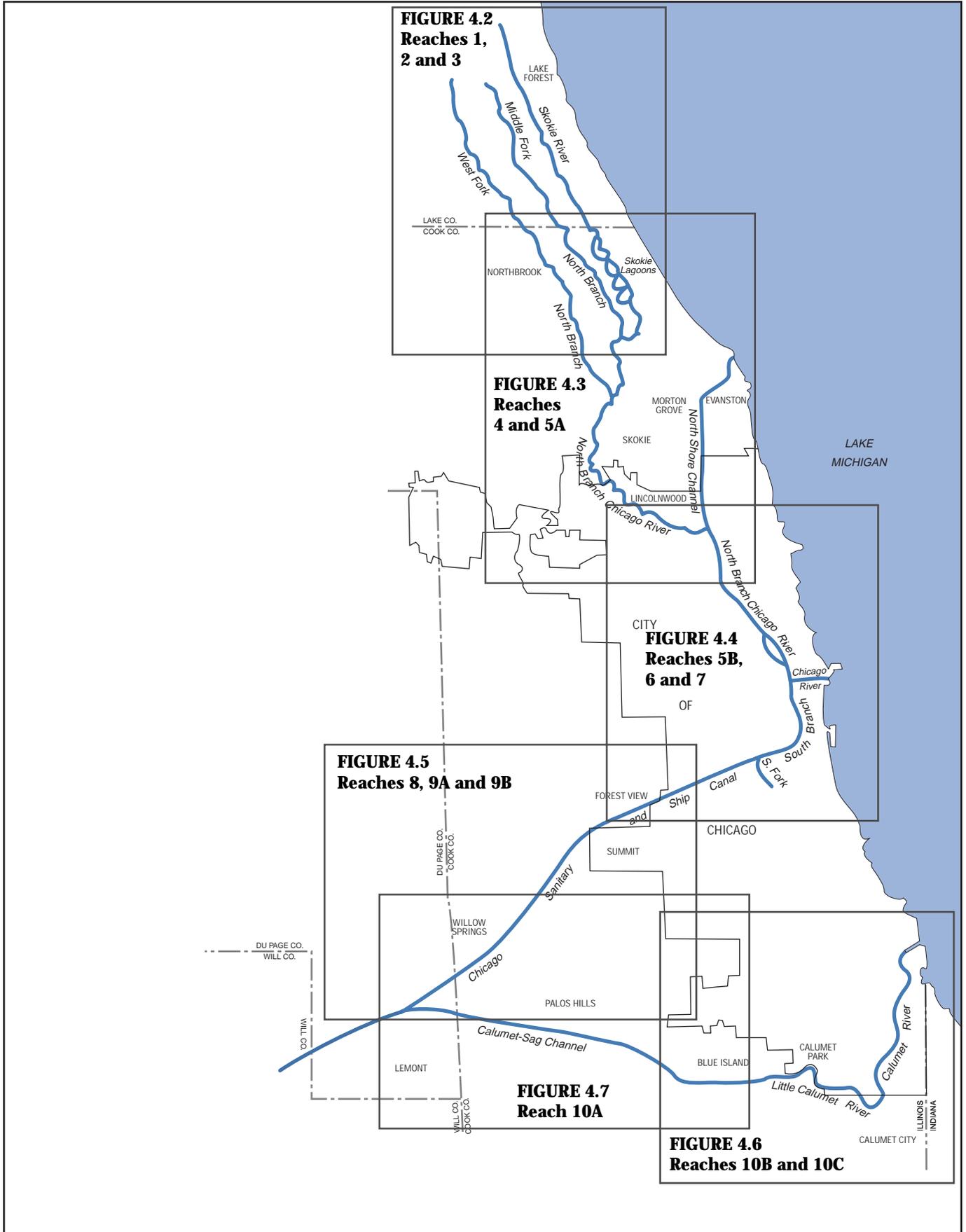


FIGURE 4.1
Map of study reaches with location of recreation-open space maps (Figures 4.2-4.7)

Established in 1889, the MWRD began with a utilitarian role. It reversed the flows of the Chicago (Reach 6), South Branch (Reach 7), and Calumet Rivers (Reach 10) to reduce pollution of Lake Michigan, the city's drinking water source. The MWRD constructed 54 miles of canals to carry the city's stormwater and effluent down the Illinois/Mississippi drainage basin instead. These canals include the North Shore Channel (Reach 4), the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal (Reaches 8 and 9), and the Cal-Sag Channel (Reach 10A); the latter two double as barge transportation routes.

Beginning in the 1960s, increasing public environmental consciousness and federal and state legislation expanded the MWRD's utilitarian role to encompass broader water quality goals. The major effort has been the Tunnel and Reservoir Plan (TARP) or Deep Tunnel project, begun in 1972 and continuing today. TARP includes a regional system of underground tunnels and surface reservoirs to store water from the network of combined sewers during periods of heavy rain, thus avoiding release of wastewater into the area's waterways before it can be treated. Aeration plants have been installed along the waterway to reintroduce oxygen into the water. These include two instream aeration plants on the North Shore Channel (Reach 4) and North Branch (Reach 5b), installed in 1979-80, and five Sidestream Elevated Pool Aeration (SEPA) plants installed along the Cal-Sag Channel in 1993-94. Centennial Fountain on the Main Branch shoots an arc of water across the river, which helps aerate the water and also creates an exciting visual display. Major technical improvements and the discontinuance of water chlorination at several of the MWRD's seven water reclamation plants have improved the quality of the discharge and the ability of the river to sustain fish and other organisms. Together with other activities such as daily surface cleanup of waters in the Loop with "skimmer boats" and annual trimming of shoreline vegetation, these activities have had a directly perceivable effect on resource quality—improving water clarity and reducing odor—and in turn increasing the aesthetic and recreational use potential of the waterway.

LAND MANAGEMENT

The impact of these improvements has caused MWRD planners and policymakers to expand their thinking about their role as managers of metropolitan land and water resources.

According to MWRD planner David Bielenberg:

The money that's expended in this region for water management, the money we spend as a society to clean up the water, does not end with just getting the clean water. Clean water is not an end in itself. This board and this government have attempted to say, "What value does clean water have for the region?" and "What are the synergistic benefits of clean water?" We did that directly by addressing the lands that are adjacent to this clean water, and we said among other things that we would look at the land along the waterway and insist that its use be public land and that no matter where the lease was—in the public or private sector, for commercial, industrial, or residential use—there must be a public recreation component to ensure that the water use benefits are received by the taxpayers who expended the resources to clean it up.

This philosophical change is being realized through recent policies that strike a balance between recreational and non-recreational uses of waterway lands that are leased, as well as in how the MWRD manages its unleased properties and the land around its own facilities.

Land leasing: The MWRD does not actively use most of the 8,000+ acres of land it owns along its waterways; instead, much of it is leased to public and private entities for open space, commercial, industrial, and other uses. Past lease agreements often allowed exclusive use of property for as long as 100 years. Leasing criteria implemented in 1984 changed this exclusive arrangement and opened up waterfront lands for a wider range of public uses:

...Now therefore, be it resolved by the Board of Commissioners of the Metropolitan Sanitary District of Greater Chicago: That henceforth all Metropolitan District Waterway property leases will encourage public open space, recreation and water edge accessibility in harmony with appropriately scaled industrial, commercial, and residential development thus motivating an extension of the benefits of Chicago's magnificent lakefront throughout the inland waterway system (1992 Facilities Plan Update, p. U91-VI-6).

Two sets of criteria that direct lease arrangements are helping carry out this policy. The River Edge Renaissance Criteria govern leases on 1,200 acres (16 miles) of the Cal-Sag Waterway, and the North Shore Channel Criteria govern leases on 380 acres (17 miles) of the North Shore Channel. Both sets of criteria are aimed at balancing built uses such as commercial, office, research, industrial, and residential development with recreational and open space development; and both call for establishing a continuous trail system and protecting the natural appearance of the water's edge. The River Edge Renaissance criteria aim at fuller utilization of currently unleased district properties, but specify that all new leases and lease renewals provide public access along the water's edge when practicable. The North Shore Channel Criteria encourage greater streamside and in-stream use of the water for recreation. Besides providing a continuous land trail, this expanded recreational objective encourages development of a water trail with water-level boating- and fishing-oriented facilities, expanded park and recreational areas, and modification of channel width and shoreland slope to better facilitate water level development.

Management activities: Much of the MWRD's waterfront land not under intensive industrial or commercial use appears very natural. In fact, despite the strong linearity of these artificial channels, many stretches of the North Shore Channel, Sanitary and Ship Canal, and Cal-Sag Channel offer good opportunities to view wildlife and experience the feeling of isolation while in the midst of the densely populated urban setting. New leasing criteria mentioned above emphasize the conservation, restoration, or landscaping of leased properties to maintain a natural appearance at shore and street levels. The district's undeveloped property includes several sites of exceptional natural value and ecological integrity such as the Lockport Prairie. Finally, the district emphasizes landscaping with native trees and plants at its

own facilities and at some of the open space sites it helps develop. The MWRD operates a tree nursery at one of its water reclamation plants and plans to expand it and specialize in trees and other plants native to the region.

Recreational facility development: Because the MWRD's mission is water treatment and management, land management and recreational development activities are often carried out in cooperation with other public and private groups. Partnerships have long been established between groups and the MWRD for recreational and other public purposes, but under recent policy and program changes these partnerships have increased in number and variety. Examples of MWRD partnerships where recreational facility development is an important outcome include:

- **“Traditional” leases:** Under its original “purchasing act,” the MWRD can lease land for public uses without competitive bids, on a dollar-per-year basis. In practice, these leases range from a year-to-year renewable lease with the Worth Boys Club for a Little League playfield the club developed, to several long-term leases with forest preserves and park districts for major park and open space development.
- **Land transfers:** In a few cases, the MWRD has turned over property to a public agency, notably a 280-acre transfer of lands along the Cal-Sag Channel to the Forest Preserve District of Cook County in 1981 (with MWRD retaining a 50-foot easement along the bank for access, shore stabilization, and scenery conservation).
- **River Edge Renaissance Criteria:** Under these criteria, the MWRD is seeking to enter into multi-government, public-private partnerships to develop its lands for recreation and other compatible uses. Their first successful venture was the Lake Katherine development in Palos Heights, which established a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district linking MWRD and private parcels along the river to create a mixed-use industrial-commercial-residential-open space development centered around an artificial lake.
- **The North Shore Channel Criteria:** These criteria are encouraging the recreational development of the North Shore Channel. A recent prototype development following these criteria is the Northshore Sculpture Park and bike trail.
- **Downtown redevelopment:** MWRD partnerships along the Main Branch of the Chicago River are helping with commercial and high-rise residential development of Cityfront Center, where the river will play a key role as an open space amenity. MWRD facilities along this stretch include Centennial Fountain and South Bank Park.
- **Heritage Canal Corridor:** The MWRD has been an important partner in the recreational development of lands along the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal as part of the Illinois & Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor, the centerpiece of which is the MWRD's 20-mile Centennial Trail.

Finally, the MWRD provides public recreational facilities at some of its developed sites, most notably the parks built in

conjunction with the new SEPA plants along the Cal-Sag Channel. See Part III of this chapter for a detailed listing of recreational facilities on MWRD lands.

FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT OF COOK COUNTY

AGENCY BACKGROUND

The county forest preserve system originated in plans by Dwight Perkins, Jens Jensen, Daniel Burnham, and other open space visionaries of the early 20th century. These plans were given the force of law in 1913, when the Illinois General Assembly passed a resolution giving counties the power to:

...acquire and hold lands containing natural forests, or lands connecting such forests for the purpose of protecting and preserving the flora, fauna and scenic beauties, and to restore, restock, protect and preserve the natural forests and said lands, together with their flora and fauna, as nearly as may be, in their natural state and condition, for the purpose of education, pleasure and recreation of the public...

The Forest Preserve District of Cook County was formally established in 1915, and as a separate taxing body, began acquiring land. By 1925, more than 25,000 acres had been purchased, often in remote areas of the county that some thought would never be accessible to most residents of Chicago. But today more than 67,000 acres of forest preserves are within easy reach of most of the county's 5.5 million residents. Cook County forest preserve lands in the Chicago River corridor include properties along Reaches 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 9, and 10 (see Figure 4.1). Most of these lands are wholly owned by the forest preserve district, are highly contiguous, and often include both sides of the waterway.

LAND MANAGEMENT

Acquisition: Principles set forth in the forest preserve enabling legislation of 1913 have guided land acquisition, management, and development philosophy of the Forest Preserve District of Cook County to the present day. This is especially the case for acquisition of property along the Chicago River corridor; in a regional landscape dominated by prairie, forested lands tended to occur within the river corridors. The Chicago and Calumet Rivers have broad floodplains undesirable for most development, but ideal for recreation, the conservation of wildlife, and other natural values. Much of the land along these corridors was purchased early in the history of the district; other parcels were obtained as they became available to amass larger, more contiguous holdings. Partnerships with the MWRD mentioned previously have allowed the forest preserve district to own and/or manage lands along the Sanitary and Ship Canal and Cal-Sag Channels. A land acquisition plan released by the forest preserve district in June 1994 examines county open space needs and opportunities and sets forth a vision for expanding the current system. This vision is based on an inventory of open land that identified more than 40,000 acres suitable for forest preserves; a public outreach process to understand the

perceptions, concerns, and issues raised by Cook County citizens and opinion leaders; guidance from a broad-based working committee; and linkages with past and current open space plans for the region. Acquisition criteria spelled out in the plan are summarized in the following guidelines:

As a general mission guideline, the District favors properties that manifest significant size and significant ecological features while providing linkages to other forest preserves or other open space properties. The next most important sites are greenways, open space buffers, or lands that assist in the management of natural resources. Recreation is generally accommodated as a complementary benefit of properties identified in the previous categories, except a special recreation site—a golf course, for instance—that might be of acquisition interest to the District. Structures or buildings on properties are always evaluated for their potential as nature centers, or for their educational, cultural, or historic value in line with the District's mission.

Opportunity areas along the Chicago River corridor identified through these criteria include segments of the West Fork of the North Branch south of Somme Woods Forest Preserve, a segment of the Sanitary and Ship Canal southwest of the Palos Preserves, and segments of the Cal-Sag Channel around Beaubien Woods Forest Preserve, including the Lake Calumet area. Acquisition criteria are balanced with the feasibility of purchasing a site or using other strategies such as leases and easements to protect it. An implementation agenda includes short- and long-term legislative, financing, and partnership strategies.

Management: Until recently, the district managed its undeveloped lands under fairly narrow definitions of the terms “forest” and “preserve.” Lands forested at the time of purchase were left largely untouched, while open lands were planted with trees and shrubs. This policy employed the best knowledge of the time, yet as rare forest communities were obtained, it became clear that just leaving them alone could be detrimental to their long-term ecological health. Moreover, “reforestation” policies were being called into question, for many of the lands purchased were historically prairie or other open ecosystems and not forests. “Hands-off” policies ignored the great amount of change happening to forest preserve lands through the invasion of exotic plant species, suppression of natural fire regimes, and other human and natural activities and processes that were altering the very values for which these lands were originally purchased.

Ecological restoration of forest preserve prairie sites along the North Branch of the Chicago River began in earnest in the late 1970s by a volunteer group, the North Branch Prairie Project. Although some of the sites along the North Branch come quite close to the river, there has been little actual restoration of shoreline vegetation. Plans to do this, however, have been proposed by the North Branch Prairie Project, and future district plans for restoration of Skokie Lagoons call for greater attention to emulating the ecological structure and functions of a wetland ecosystem.

Restoration of other district lands has also been significant and recently became a principal goal for land management. In the late 1970s, forest preserve district staff person Ralph

Thornton began restoring prairie and savanna sites in the Palos-Sag Preserves. Activities by private groups and the district blossomed; through controlled burning, brush cutting, seeding, and other techniques, staff and volunteers have been instrumental in restoring prairie, savanna, woodland, and wetland communities on district lands. The Nature Conservancy established the Volunteer Stewardship Network in 1983 to coordinate and assist restoration efforts, helping to establish new groups such as the Palos Restoration Project. Today, the district embraces the need for active ecological management of its lands. In the recently created position of Land Manager, Ralph Thornton began a comprehensive restoration plan for district properties; this plan received a boost in 1995 through funding of the Ecosystem Management Project in the Greater Chicago Metropolitan Area. This project is working to preserve, conserve, and manage the unique biological diversity found in the forests, woodlands, savannas, and prairies across all lands managed by the district. It is carried out by a partnership consisting of the Forest Preserve District of Cook County, The Nature Conservancy, USDA Forest Service, USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, and Illinois Department of Natural Resources—Division of Forestry.

Development: A 1929 plan for the Cook County forest preserves recommended that 75 percent of acquisitions be kept in their natural state, 14 percent as picnic and play areas, 5 percent as water recreation areas, 4 percent as golf courses, and 2 percent as a zoo and an arboretum. These percentages have been held to quite closely, and recreational development has generally been kept low key in type and style. For example, major facilities construction by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) during the 1930s used stone, rough-hewn wood, and other natural materials that gave sites a rustic feel. Many of these facilities remain today, and contemporary site amenities similarly aim not to intrude on the naturalness of the forest preserve setting. Major recreational developments along the Chicago River Corridor include the following:

- **North Branch (Reaches 1, 2, 3, and 5):** Forest preserves along these reaches are separated into the North Branch (1,650 acres) and Skokie (3,351 acres) Divisions. Facilities include the 20-mile North Branch Bicycle Trail, the Chicago Botanic Gardens, several picnic groves and related facilities, 3 golf courses, a toboggan slide, a swimming pool, and other assorted amenities. A historic centerpiece of landscape development and one of the district's greatest recreational attractions is the Skokie Lagoons, a series of 7 lagoons dug from an extensive wetlands area by the CCCs during the 1930s. The Lagoons offer boating, fishing, and a host of complementary shoreland activities, drawing large numbers of residents from throughout the metropolitan region (see Chapter 3 and Part III of this chapter for more information). The North Branch restoration sites mentioned above are considered by many to be important recreation sites as well; as more people view restoration as a form of leisure, these sites will attain increasing recognition as important components in the recreation delivery system of forest preserves.

- **Sanitary and Ship Canal/Cal-Sag Channel (Reaches 8, 9, and 10):** Forest preserves along these reaches are part of the Palos (6,523 acres), Sag Valley (8,990 acres), and Calumet (1,679 acres) Divisions. The contiguous block of land forming the bulk of the Palos and Sag Valley Divisions is commonly called the Palos Preserves; with more than 13,000 acres of hilly uplands, marshes, and lakes, it is the largest and most diverse forest area in the county. The Palos Preserves has a full range of facilities, including picnic groves, fishing sites, 2 nature centers, a canoe trail (along the Des Plaines River), and an extensive trail system. Few of these facilities relate directly to the Sanitary and Ship Canal or Cal-Sag Channels, primarily because the shorelines along these waterways were heaped with stone debris when the original channels were dug. The I&M Canal Bicycle Trail parallels the Sanitary and Ship Canal as the trail follows the old tow path of the historic I&M Canal. Several plans are in the works, however, to increase recreational access to and use of these waterways. These plans, described fully in Part III, will link forest preserve sites and existing trails together with new trails.

Forest preserve sites along the Little Calumet River are more directly related to the waterway than those along the Cal-Sag or Sanitary and Ship Canal. In addition to several picnic groves, playfields, and a golf course, two boating centers offer access to the Chicago River system and Lake Michigan. Flatfoot Lake, near the Little Calumet River in Beaubien Woods Forest Preserve, has been designated as a ChicagoRivers demonstration project with partial funding provided under the federal Urban Resources Partnership program. This project includes restoration of shoreline vegetation and improved fisheries, along with increased recreational access and use.

LAKE COUNTY FOREST PRESERVES

AGENCY BACKGROUND

Lake County Forest Preserves was established in 1958, and its holdings today amount to more than 18,000 acres. As guided by the 1913 Illinois enabling statutes, the district provides a county-wide system of sites “acquired and managed for the purposes of preservation, restoration, education, and recreation.” Today, the system serves Lake County’s 400,000 residents, with sites distributed throughout the county. Of these properties, the district owns about 1,500 acres of land along the Chicago River corridor (Reaches 1, 2, and 3), including the 536-acre Greenbelt Forest Preserve at the headwaters of the Skokie River (Reach 3), which is technically outside the boundaries of the ChicagoRivers study area.

LAND MANAGEMENT

Acquisition: Much of the district’s recent land acquisition has focused on the county’s river corridors, especially the Des Plaines River, the major waterway in the county. Currently the district holds around 7,000 acres on the Des Plaines, about 40 percent of all Lake County forest preserve

property. The West Fork, Middle Fork, and Skokie River flow through the more densely populated parts of the county, so opportunities for acquisition along these reaches have been more limited. These Chicago River corridor lands do, however, have significant environmental resources; a recent land acquisition plan and natural areas inventory have resulted in the purchase of some important properties. One recent purchase is the Middle Fork Savanna, a 477-acre site containing virgin prairie and savanna areas.

Management: The long-term land management goal for the Lake County Forest Preserves is to retain or restore a high percentage of holdings to a natural state. Many recently obtained properties remain undeveloped for recreation; these include sites purchased primarily for their natural values, such as the Middle Fork Savanna, as well as several parcels where reservoirs have been constructed for flood control. In addition to these sites, about 15 percent of the district’s land is under cultivation and not open to public use. These are recently purchased lands that were under cultivation at the time of purchase; rather than letting the land lie fallow and become overrun by weeds, the district is keeping these lands under cultivation until funds and plans are in place to convert them to natural areas or recreational facilities.

Much of the management activity at forest preserve sites along the Chicago River corridor is aimed at restoration, recreation, or, in some cases, creation of natural communities of water, wetland, woodland, prairie, and savanna. Lake County is the headwaters of the North Branch, and the marshy landscape around all three of its tributary forks was severely modified for agriculture early in this century. Restoration of the natural hydrology of these sites is an important factor in overall site restoration. District activities include breaking drain tiles, increasing the meandering and widening of the ditched river channel, and re-creating wetland areas. When new flood control reservoirs are developed, a related goal is to maximize their potential for wildlife and recreation. Preferred methods are to buy larger sites that offer opportunities to create more than the “steep-walled, deep hole in the ground” characteristic of older reservoirs in the corridor. Vegetation management involves collection of seed from nearby native sources, planting, burning, brush cutting, and other activities. Volunteers play an active part in these aspects of ecosystem restoration.

Development: Because of the small size of the waterways and the importance and fragility of the natural ecosystems present, many of the forest preserve sites along the East, Middle, and West Forks do not lend themselves to large-scale recreational development. Sites that will be developed for recreation will be geared mostly to nature-oriented recreation. Examples of sites include:

- **Bannockburn Basin:** This flood control site is the only district property on the West Fork. This small (40 acres) site was developed in the 1970s as a conventional, steep-walled reservoir. It is fenced off as required by the Village of Bannockburn and has no public access.

- **Middle Fork Savanna:** Presently at 477 acres, this Middle Fork site contains some high-quality virgin prairie and savanna areas. Restoration plans are underway in cooperation with Lake Forest Open Lands, a private non-profit land conservation group. Development of a foot trail system is being considered for recreation and nature study.
- **Lake Forest site:** This 431-acre Middle Fork site was purchased for flood control. Much of the land is leased for farming and has not yet been developed for flood control or recreation. Prairie Wolf Slough, a 28-acre section of this site, is being restored as part of a ChicagoRivers demonstration project in partnership with Lake County Forest Preserves and the federal Urban Resources Partnership program.
- **Berkeley Prairie:** This 18-acre Middle Fork site is surrounded by suburban housing development and contains informal trails through a restored prairie ecosystem.
- **Lake Bluff site:** This 85-acre flood control site along the East Fork has not yet been developed for flood control or recreation. There are informal trails through the site, with plans to link a foot trail to a Lake Forest Open Lands conservancy site to the south. A new trail links the property to a Village of Lake Bluff site to the north.
- **Greenbelt site:** This 536-acre site at the headwaters of the East Fork stands out from the other sites because of its full-scale recreational development. Located near Waukegan and North Chicago, this high-use site provides picnic grounds, ball fields, play equipment, a biking/hiking trail, and two 6-acre stocked fishing ponds.

CHICAGO PARK DISTRICT

AGENCY BACKGROUND

Established in 1934 from a merger of five regional park districts, the Chicago Park District is the major provider of park and open space opportunities within the City of Chicago. The district has 552 parks ranging in size from small playlots to the 1,200+ acre Lincoln Park. Properties owned, used, and/or maintained by the Chicago Park District amount to more than 7,400 acres and serve a city population of 2.8 million. Of these properties, 16 parks on the Chicago River corridor are owned or leased by the district, for a total of 240 acres and 6 miles of river frontage. These properties are located primarily on the North Branch (Reach 5), but also include some land on the North Shore Channel (Reach 4), the Main Branch (Reach 6), and the South Branch (Reach 7).

LAND MANAGEMENT

Acquisition: New park space of significant size is very hard to come by within the city limits, but the park district recently used innovative means for obtaining some key properties along the Chicago River Corridor. One of these is the 12-acre Chinatown site, a \$1.4 million purchase of vacant industrial land on the east bank of the South Branch between 16th Street and Cermak Rd. This property is significant not only

because it will be the first park on the South Branch, but also because it will provide needed open space to the Chinatown and Bridgeport Community Areas identified by the park district as “underserved” in terms of per capita park acreage. Leasing is another means to provide new park space; the park district leases 83 acres of riverfront land from the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District and the City of Chicago. A recent example of such an arrangement is Ronan Park on the North Branch, owned by and being developed in partnership with the MWRD. Possibilities for further leasing and purchasing of land are mentioned in the “development” section below.

Management: In contrast to the forest preserve districts, Chicago Park District land is managed mostly for high-use active and passive recreational activities. This means the predominant land cover is mown grass, with many areas that are open and other areas that have groves of widely spaced trees. Most river parks relate only indirectly to the river, and it has been park district policy to fence the river off for public safety. Vegetation along the immediate shore is usually left in an unmanaged state, often growing up and around fences and obscuring river views. This policy may change in the future, for park district legal research has found no legal requirement for fencing. More importantly, park district landscape management and policy directors, along with selected staff, are attempting to establish an ecological approach to landscape management and restoration; as a basis for instituting such an approach, they conducted a natural areas inventory of the parks to identify promising lagoon, wetland, prairie, savanna, and woodland areas for ecological restoration and management. Many of the river parks are included in the wetlands category, the most promising of which is Gompers Park (Reach 5a). The Gompers wetland restoration site was identified as a ChicagoRivers demonstration site, and partial funding for the restoration has been secured through the federal Urban Resources Partnership program. This restoration is being carried out by the Chicago Park District in a community-based volunteer effort, with cooperation and assistance from federal, state, and local agencies.

Development: Existing river parks are developed with a variety of facilities for recreation. The larger river parks like Horner, Gompers, and River Park include fieldhouses and gymnasiums, and most of the parks have playfields, ball courts, and playground facilities. New river park development ranges from facilities currently under construction to plans still in the concept stage. Highlights of this development activity include the following:

- **North Branch Riverwalk:** The park district has begun to implement a 1990 riverwalk plan prepared by Friends of the Chicago River, the North River Commission, and the Albany Park Planning Committee. In summer 1994, construction of a bike trail began in Legion (Reach 4) and River (Reach 5) Parks, and trail and other facility development began in Ronan Park. When completed, these three parks will be linked by a trail, supplementing an older foot path system not geared to bicycle use. Long-range plans

include the linkage of park district parks on the North Branch above River Park to form a 3-mile trail with connections to Forest Preserve District of Cook County lands and the forest preserve district's 20-mile-long North Branch Bicycle Trail.

- **North Shore Channel development:** The Chicago Park District and the MWRD are also negotiating the possible transfer or lease of MWRD property along the North Shore Channel in Lincolnwood to the park district. This 25-acre addition would be developed with a bike trail and related facilities for passive use, and it would connect to the trail at Legion Park. If completed, this segment would link with the North Branch Riverwalk and North Branch Bicycle Trail and with trails along the North Shore Channel in Skokie and Evanston.
- **Turning Basin, Marina, and Gateway Park:** The Chicago Park District has developed a conceptual plan for the mouth of the Chicago River, improving the turning basin to create a gateway to the city and linking the lake-front park and trail system with the Chicago Riverwalk. The plan also calls for developing marina space in the basin. The land is currently in multiple jurisdictions, including the MWRD, Army Corps of Engineers, Illinois Department of Transportation, U.S. Coast Guard, and the City of Chicago. This large-scale redevelopment poses major challenges for integrating increased recreational use of the turning basin with current uses of the basin and lock by commercial, industrial, and tour boats.
- **Chinatown Park/Bubbly Creek Wetland Park:** Already mentioned, the 12-acre Chinatown park site along the South Branch will bring significant new park space to the underserved communities on the southwest side of Chicago. In 1993, a visiting architect from China developed a conceptual design for the park, integrating Chinese cultural symbols and activities (such as a tea house) within a plan that would respond to the recreational needs and preferences of the community. These needs and preferences were examined in a 1994 Forest Service-sponsored study of the Chinatown community. Just south of the Chinatown Park site is Bubbly Creek, where a "wetlands park" has been proposed. Lead agencies in this project include the Chicago Park District, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. This project is still in the conceptual stage, and all land is currently in private ownership.
- **Chicago Origins Park and Interpretive Site:** In cooperation with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and the Canal Corridor Association, the park district is planning a 1.5-acre park on the South Branch at 28th Street and Ashland Avenue on the site that was the gateway to the historic I&M Canal. The land is presently owned by the Department of Natural Resources.

VILLAGE OF GLENVIEW

This suburban community of 37,000 includes long stretches of the West Fork and North Branches in Cook County. Within the community boundaries, the North Branch is wholly surrounded by forest preserve (Harms Woods), except for a small piece of frontage owned by the Wilmette Golf Club. However, most of the land along the West Fork is privately owned and in residential development. The Glenview Park District owns three small parks along the West Fork: Tall Tree, Sleepy Hollow, and Riverside. Two large, private landholdings along the West Fork include the Techny Basin and the Glenview Country Club. The village includes other significant open spaces not on the Chicago River corridor, including forest preserve land along the Des Plaines River; Kennicott's Grove, a historic-natural area under the jurisdiction of the Glenview Park District; and the recently closed 1,200-acre Glenview Naval Air Station, which includes a golf course and several undeveloped land parcels, including a 14-acre remnant prairie.

Glenview's park district oversees management of its park spaces along the West Fork, while its planning commission guides overall planning and development of open space. Three examples highlight current open space activities in Glenview:

- **West Fork Green/River Avenue project:** A plan to develop the downtown section of the West Fork as an open space focal point was first proposed in the 1970s and was resurrected in Glenview's 1990 comprehensive plan. The plan calls for expanding the green open space areas along the river and for building a new pavilion, tot lot, and parking lot.
- **West Fork Greenway:** Using this new downtown park as a central focus, a related plan by the village calls for developing a bikeway along the West Fork, leading north to Sleepy Hollow Park and South to Riverside Park. The Glenview section of the greenway would be connected with trail segments along the Middle Fork in Northfield, the West Fork in Northbrook and Golf, and the North Branch in Morton Grove. Segments of the trail corridor might also follow the Metra commuter rail right-of-way. The long-term goal of this plan is to have an interconnected trail linking these suburbs with the 20-mile North Branch Bicycle Trail of the Forest Preserve District of Cook County.
- **Techny Basin:** In the north part of Glenview lies a privately owned, 300-acre site that is being developed as a corporate office park. The site is owned by Marathon U.S. Realities, but the MWRD has easements and has built two detention basins near the river corridor on the site. Plans are to develop this part of the site (around 80 acres) as a conservation/public use area, and the village is working with the developers, the MWRD, Friends of the Chicago River, and other groups to carry out this plan. Plan elements include development of a trail, a wetland and native plant restoration area, and a 10-15-acre park site that was donated to the village.

CITY OF EVANSTON

This community of 78,000 includes a significant portion of the North Shore Channel (Reach 4). Established in 1863, the city has long placed a high priority on open space, which is reflected in its wide residential lots and parkway strips, many parks and access sites to Lake Michigan, and its nationally renowned street tree program. Evanston was one of the first communities along the North Shore Channel to develop the recreational potential of the channel; through lease arrangements with the MWRD, it established the Jans Community Golf Course (90 acres, including a portion in neighboring Wilmette), Ladd Arboretum and Evanston Ecology Center (21 acres), Channel Bike Path, and many neighborhood Canal Land parks (55 acres total) along its banks. Except for four small private and institutional leaseholders, the entire North Shore Channel in Evanston is in public open space.

Past policies and activities that have shaped management of these properties are being reviewed in light of renewed interest in the North Shore Channel as a recreational resource. Some of the issues that have recently surfaced include:

- **Canoe access to the Channel:** A canoe landing was built in the early '70s behind the Ecology Center and was used by the Voyageur Brigade canoe club until the late '70s. The landing has been used periodically for special events since then, but the City of Evanston has been reluctant to open the landing to wider use because of potential liability and safety issues. If the landing was improved and opened to public use, these issues would need to be resolved.
- **Land access to the Channel:** Under new MWRD leasing criteria, the City of Evanston and other leaseholders along the North Shore Channel will be required to remove fencing, modify river banks, develop a pathway, and provide other improvements and amenities that will make the waterway more accessible to the public. The City of Evanston and other municipalities along the channel have expressed reservations about modifying river banks because of the cost (estimated near \$1 million for Evanston). Because of safety concerns, they have also objected to fence removal along the waterway and development of a bike path through the golf course.

VILLAGE OF PALOS HEIGHTS

The Palos Heights Park District manages the Lake Katherine Nature Center, which attracts south suburban residents and school groups. As mentioned in the MWRD profile, the Lake Katherine project was initiated in the late 1980s through the creation of a Tax Incremental Financing district linking public and private parcels along the river to form a mixed-use development. The 93-acre nature center surrounds a 20-acre artificial lake. Trails encircle the lake and provide access to a 2-acre prairie restoration, a wetland, a children's forest, and the Cal-Sag Channel. Lands along the channel form the "wildest" part of the nature center and include wooded areas and varied

topography. Many different species of birds have been observed along the channel, which is also well used by recreational boaters and commercial barges. More than 1,500 people may use the nature center on a Saturday. More than 120 volunteers help the full-time naturalist with environmental education programs and landscape restoration activities.

PUBLIC AGENCIES NOT FORMALLY INTERVIEWED

Although the profiles above give a reasonably good picture of public agency activities at the regional, county, and municipal levels, the activities of other groups not formally interviewed are also important. These include numerous federal agencies who own, manage, regulate, or help manage lands in the corridor; many of these agencies are active participants in the ChicagoRivers Project.

At the state level, the **Illinois Department of Natural Resources** owns some properties in the corridor, most notably the William Powers Conservation Area near the Calumet River. The department is also responsible for fish and wildlife conservation, enforcement of recreational boating laws, and other activities that impact the corridor.

At the regional level, the **Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission** has been instrumental in inventorying and planning for the natural resources of the region. One of its most important contributions to the Chicago River corridor is the 1992 Regional Greenways Plan, developed in conjunction with Openlands Project.

At the county level, the **Forest Preserve District of DuPage County** and the **Forest Preserve District of Will County** each have significant property holdings on the Sanitary and Ship Canal. Each is involved in active programs of land acquisition, trail development, and ecological restoration that will increase corridor recreation opportunities.

At the local level, the City of Chicago **Department of Planning and Development** has initiated or cooperated in many planning efforts that focus in whole or part on the river corridor within the city, including the 1990 Chicago River Urban Design Guidelines for the Downtown Corridor (with Friends of the Chicago River), the current **CitySpace** plan (with the Forest Preserve District of Cook County and the Chicago Park District), and the current **Inland Waterway Guideline Review Committee**. The **Department of Environment** has also made its presence felt on the river corridor; it produced an inventory report on the natural areas and potential natural areas of Chicago, which identifies several sites on the river corridor.

Outside the city, 40 suburbs line the Chicago River corridor from Park City on the north to Calumet City on the south. These include 19 suburbs along the North Branch and its tributaries, 10 southwestern suburbs along the Sanitary and Ship Canal, and 12 south suburbs along the Cal-Sag Channel and Calumet River. Through their planning departments and park districts, many of these local units of government are also contributing to the protection and enhancement of the corridor.

PRIVATE NOT-FOR-PROFIT GROUPS

FRIENDS OF THE CHICAGO RIVER

Established in 1979, the Friends of the Chicago River is a non-profit citizens group whose mission is to protect and improve the environmental quality of the Chicago River and its related waterways; encourage appropriate economic activity and development that is sensitive to the environment; and increase awareness, involvement, and appreciation of the river by the public and policy makers. The Friends guided the passage of the 1983 City of Chicago river protection ordinance; co-authored the 1990 Chicago River Urban Design Guidelines for the Downtown Area; published a series of river trail maps; and continues to sponsor river walks, canoe trips, and special river-related social events. The group sponsored two "Voices from the Stream" workshops in 1990 and 1992, which brought together diverse groups and individuals concerned about the Chicago River, leading to the ChicagoRivers project. One of the initiatives stemming from this activity is the RiverWatch program, which organizes volunteers to monitor the environmental quality of river reaches. The North Branch Riverwalk is one of several current projects the group is working on, furthering its mission to ensure appropriate development of the river. Finally, as part of the ChicagoRivers program, the Friends are working with communities and neighborhoods along the river to identify problems and opportunities and to organize constituencies for work on local projects.

COOK COUNTY CLEAN STREAMS COMMITTEE

The Cook County Clean Streams Committee, a citizens group sponsored by the Forest Preserve District of Cook County, acts as a watchdog for problems on rivers throughout the county. The committee is organized by reach, and the Chicago River corridor is divided into North Branch, South Branch, and Calumet reaches. Volunteers walk and canoe their reach regularly to identify problems and work with the forest preserve district and other agencies to solve them. The group also acts as a liaison between local citizens and the many public agencies who have jurisdiction over the river. Most of the problems are identified by visual monitoring and include dumping, vegetation management, and other threats to the water quality, aesthetics, or navigability of the river.

NORTH BRANCH RESTORATION PROJECT

The North Branch Restoration Project is a volunteer stewardship group formed in 1977 to maintain, enhance, and restore ecosystems along the North Branch of the Chicago River. The group has focused on Forest Preserve District of Cook County prairies, but has also taken on savanna, woodland, and wetland sites on and off of forest preserve-owned land. Although most of the site restoration does not occur directly

on the river, the North Branch of the Chicago River functionally unites all of the restoration sites, serving as a corridor for plant and animal movement. The group is, however, conducting some experiments on riverbank stabilization using native plants. Individual sites are managed by a steward, and workdays are organized for restoration activities such as burning, brush cutting, seed collecting, and planting. The North Branch Restoration Project has almost 1,000 members, including a very active core group of about 150. The group is part of the larger Volunteer Stewardship Network organized by the Illinois Chapter of The Nature Conservancy.

CHICAGO AUDUBON SOCIETY

The Chicago Audubon Society is a chapter of one of the nation's largest and oldest established environmental groups. Its purpose is broadly oriented around the preservation of wildlife and habitat, and its activities are wide-ranging and global in concern. The Chicago chapter, in existence since 1972, has more than 6,000 members, including a core group of about 100-200. Within the broad-scale mission of the national group, the chapter has a special concern for the landscape of the Chicago area. A major environmental feature of this region is the Chicago River corridor, and the group organizes outings to view and count birds at the Skokie Lagoons, the mouth of the Chicago River, the Palos Preserves, and Lake Calumet.

CHICAGO RIVER AQUATIC CENTER

The Chicago River Aquatic Center was founded in 1979 to demonstrate and promote the potential of the Chicago River for non-motorized water sports in the context of current motorized recreational and non-recreational uses. The group uses the downtown sections of the river corridor as a training course for rowing, and stores its sculls and operates activities out of the old U.S. Coast Guard Station at the mouth of the river. As part of its mission in promoting the river for non-motorized water sports, the Chicago River Aquatic Center hosts major rowing events, such as the Iron Oars Marathon, a 15-mile race from Evanston to downtown Chicago, which is billed as the "world's longest smooth-water sculling race," and the Chicago Regatta, in which top collegiate rowing teams compete for Midwest, U.S., British, and International titles. The 50 members who belong to the center also include kayakers and canoeists.

CHICAGO RIVERWALK CORPORATION

The Chicago Riverwalk Corporation was established in 1991 by the Chicago Central Area Committee and the Friends of the Chicago River to implement the Chicago Riverwalk Project: a continuous system of walkways, plazas, and recreational areas along the downtown riverfront from Navy Pier on Lake Michigan to Chinatown on the South Branch. The Riverwalk Corporation is governed by a board that includes

the major local public agencies, the Friends of the Chicago River, and downtown businesses and riverfront property interests. The corporation inventoried current land use and open space opportunities within these project boundaries and prepared a master plan, phased development program, and budget for implementation. The plan and program focus on the public land in the project area, about 30 percent or 2.5 miles of the total river frontage; the plan identifies how new and existing private development on this land can be used to complete the riverwalk system.

NON-PROFIT GROUPS NOT FORMALLY INTERVIEWED

In addition to the non-profit groups we formally interviewed, many others are making important contributions toward improving the Chicago River corridor for recreation and other values. These include local groups such as **Lake Forest Open Lands** and **Lake Bluff Open Lands** who purchase lands within their villages and then hold them in trust for conservation, restoration, and recreation purposes. These groups have also leased properties from their villages for similar objectives.

Regional groups such as **Openlands Project** are also active in the corridor. River corridors have been an important focus of Openlands' activities since the group was formed in 1963. Friends of the Chicago River started as a program of Openlands, and the project's current Greenways program and affiliate groups **CorLands** and **Wetlands Research, Inc.** are closely tied to river corridor planning and development. Openlands' 21st Century Open Space Plan was one of the first regional plans to identify the Chicago River corridor as a key component in a metropolitan greenway system, and further study by Openlands and the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission in the 1992 Northeastern Illinois Regional Greenways Plan provided detailed recommendations for greenway development along specific reaches of the corridor. A major update of the Greenways plan is in progress.

The Nature Conservancy is another group that is active regionally. Its Volunteer Stewardship Network, established in 1983, coordinates ecological restoration activities and currently has more than 5,000 members. Two groups affiliated with the network are working in the Chicago River Corridor: the North Branch Restoration Project, discussed previously, and the **Palos Restoration Project**, which conducts restoration activities in the Palos Forest Preserves that border on the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal and Cal-Sag Channel. The Palos and North Branch sites form two core areas of the recently announced Chicago Wilderness Bioserve Initiative, a program through which The Nature Conservancy works in partnership with area forest preserves, public agencies and institutions, and other partners to increase the region's biodiversity.

The Canal Corridor Association (CCA) was established in 1982 to help preserve and improve the cultural and natural resources of the Illinois & Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor. This 120-mile-long corridor—the first of its kind to receive national designation—overlaps the ChicagoRivers

study area from downtown Chicago to Lockport and Calumet Harbor. CCA activities include planning and technical assistance as well as cultural and educational events. Its Main Street Partnership trains and organizes volunteers in local communities along the I&M Canal National Heritage Corridor to work on historic preservation and economic revitalization projects. The partnership involves six communities along the I&M Canal, including three (Blue Island, Lemont, and Lockport) that fall within the ChicagoRivers study area. In addition, CCA coordinates activities with other Heritage Corridor interest groups and agencies, including the National Park Service and the **Friends of the I&M Canal National Heritage Corridor**.

The **Calumet Ecological Park Association** is concerned with protecting and enhancing the rich ecological diversity of the Lake Calumet area in the southeastern part of the ChicagoRivers study area. The association has identified seven environmental resource corridors in the Lake Calumet area that would form the components of an ecological park. Two of these corridors, the Cal-Sag Channel/Little Calumet River and the Calumet River, are part of the ChicagoRivers study area. In these and the other five corridors, the association has identified existing ecological sites such as marshes and other potential open space sites such as landfills that would make up the actual park lands. Proponents see the park as forming the missing link between the I&M Canal National Heritage Corridor to the west and the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore to the east.

PRIVATE COMMERCIAL RECREATION PROVIDERS

WENDELLA SIGHTSEEING BOATS

Founded in 1935, Wendella is the oldest of several companies that offer regularly scheduled or chartered boat tours of the Chicago River. Its three boats are docked at the Michigan Avenue bridge, in a central location for local and out-of-town tourists. The company offers regular 1-, 1½-, and 2-hour tours of the downtown portions of the lake and river (from the lock at the mouth to River City on the South Branch). They offer an average of 10 trips per day on weekdays and up to 20 trips during peak summer weekends. A tour commentary informs tourists about the river and highlights special points of interest. Wendella also offers special charter tours, including 7-hour spring and fall tours of the navigable portions of the Chicago River waterway system that begin on the Main Channel, go up the North Branch to the turning basin, back down to the South Branch, Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal, up the Cal-Sag Channel and Calumet River to Lake Michigan, and up the lake shore back to downtown. Since 1962, the company has also offered a weekday commuter service between Michigan Avenue and Madison Street Boats depart every 10 minutes during rush hours and make an efficient and pleasant 7-minute trip between the Michigan Avenue shopping district and Union Station.

CHICAGOLAND CANOE BASE, INC.

The Chicagoland Canoe base is a primary source for rental canoes and information about canoeing opportunities on the Chicago River corridor and other rivers in the metropolitan area and beyond. Owned and managed by long-time Chicago River advocate Ralph Frese, the store also has a large selection of crafts, accessories, books, and maps for canoeing, kayaking, and rowing. In addition to sales and rentals, Frese offers service, lessons, and special guided tours to make the public and policymakers more aware of the beauty, recreational potential, and problems with metropolitan Chicago rivers. Active in the Cook County Clean Streams Committee, the Prairie State Canoeists, and the Chicago Area Sea Kayaking Association, Frese and the Chicagoland Canoe Base serve as a clearinghouse for information on the past, present, and future of the Chicago River.

MARINA CITY MARINA

The Marina City Marina was built by Phillips 66 in the early 1960s as part of the Marina City development and has been an independent operation since 1977. The full-service marina can store up to 65 boats, 12 in slips and the rest in dry storage. It also offers gas, repairs, accessories, and launching. However, it does not have a ramp and few boaters who do not store their boats at the marina will pay the expense of having their boats lifted by crane into the water. The marina has a few slips available for transient docking, but these are often filled on summer weekends.

WINDJAMMER ENTERPRISES

Windjammer Enterprises is one of a group of marinas located on the Calumet River on Chicago's far Southeast Side. The marina, in operation since 1929, offers slip rentals, boat service, refreshments, launching, and winter storage for 135 boats.

NORTH PIER CHICAGO

North Pier is a historic shipping warehouse and storage building that was converted in 1989 into an indoor mall containing retail stores, restaurants, and entertainment establishments. Located on Ogden Slip near the mouth of the Chicago River downtown, it is one of only a few places downtown where one can tie a boat to shore. The river is a main feature of the site, and dock and upper level promenades offer attractive views of the river and city. Three restaurants have outdoor seating on floating docks. Anglers frequent the slip during seasonal runs. Docking and rafting facilities in the slip can accommodate 50-60 boats; a \$10 per hour docking fee encourages rapid turnover. The slip is also the dock for the "Chicago from the Lake" tour boat, and North Pier houses offices for other major tour boats including the "Odyssey" and the "Spirit of Chicago."

PRIVATE COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL INTERESTS

CSX REAL PROPERTY, INC.

CSX is a Fortune 500 corporation whose major holdings are in railroad, barge, and other transportation companies. The real estate assets of the corporation are managed by CSX Real Property, Inc., which attempts to maximize profit on surplus railroad and other properties through sale or development. In Chicago, CSX Real Property owns the property along the East Bank of the South Branch between Harrison and Polk Streets, the site of the old Baltimore and Ohio-Chicago Terminal Railroad station, which was demolished in 1970. CSX has a plan and permit approval for a 4½ million square foot mixed-use development on this 8-acre site. The framework plan includes Class A office space; residential developments; retail, hotel, and parking facilities; and open space. Close cooperation with the City of Chicago, Friends of the Chicago River, and other groups has resulted in a design that includes a riverwalk and terrace along the length of the site as well as several plazas linking the riverwalk with the buildings and perimeter streets and sidewalks. Actual building development is contingent on interested buyers, who will fit their space and building needs into the framework developed by CSX. Harris Bank has purchased one of the building sites, but development is on hold until the downtown development climate improves. Other CSX properties near the river downtown include 6 acres north of Roosevelt Road and 22 acres south of Roosevelt Road. Conceptual plans for these areas include various types of residential development, some commercial development, a publicly accessible riverwalk, and a marina.

TRIBUNE PROPERTIES, INC.

Tribune Properties owns and manages the Freedom Center, a Chicago Tribune paper printing plant located on the North Branch of the Chicago River between Chicago and Grand Avenues. The plant, built in 1981-82, occupies 29 acres of land. River frontage is landscaped on the north and south ends of the site, screening parking lots from the river view. River frontage alongside the plant building is concrete, and was designed as a docking facility for barges to drop off newsprint (currently all newsprint shipment arrives by rail). Public access to the site is very restricted because of security and safety concerns, and land and water access points are monitored with closed-circuit cameras and dock alarms. The landscaped park on the south end of the site is used by employees during lunch breaks.

COMMONWEALTH EDISON COMPANY

Commonwealth Edison provides electric power to the Chicago metropolitan area and owns many properties that

touch the Chicago River, including coal-fired generating stations, electrical substations, storage facilities, powerline rights-of-way, and office space. These properties are located along the Cal-Sag Channel in Palos Hills, on the Sanitary and Ship Canal in the Will County suburb of Romeoville, in the Cook County suburb of Forest View, and in Chicago near Pulaski Rd. and south of downtown near Cermak Rd.; along the South Branch downtown near Taylor Street; and along the North Branch near Division and at Addison. The generating stations use the waterway for receiving coal from barges and for cooling; shoreline treatments at these facilities are mostly functional, and historically little regard has been paid to landscaping or other aesthetic considerations. The electrical substations are fenced off for safety reasons, but as a general policy the company tries to accommodate recreational use of its properties when compatible with its operating requirements. Currently there is no public access to facility sites on waterway properties. On other properties (primarily powerline rights-of-way), recreational uses usually involve bike paths or walkways, which are leased by park and forest preserve districts or municipalities.

CHICAGO UNION STATION COMPANY

The Chicago Union Station Company owns and manages several railroad properties along the West Bank of the South Branch, from Wolf Point (junction with the Main Branch and North Branch) south to 18th Street. The northernmost portion of these holdings (from Fulton to Randolph Streets) has active Amtrak rail lines, but is otherwise undeveloped. In the middle section (Randolph to Jackson Streets) the rail line goes underground, and the aboveground property has been redeveloped as Riverside Plaza, which has a street-level (and for one block, dock-level) riverwalk that includes landscaped plazas, outdoor seating, and summertime cafes. The southernmost part of the holdings (Taylor to 18th Street) is actively used as a railyard for Amtrak and other railroads, but has an undeveloped riverfront. The undeveloped sections of Union Station's property were identified for river edge landscaping and possible dock- or street-level walkways in the city's 1990 Chicago River Urban Design Guidelines. Property managers are open to landscape improvements, but have reservations about providing public access because of safety and security concerns.

ILLINOIS RIVER CARRIERS ASSOCIATION

The association is the major voice for barge owners who operate on the Chicago River waterway. The major use of the waterway for barges is along the Sanitary and Ship Canal and Cal-Sag Channel, though some barges operate on the North Branch up to Belmont Avenue and on the Main Channel. Group members are very concerned about maintaining the waterway as an efficient route for commerce and for their own livelihood; they are generally cautious and concerned about present and increased use and development of the waterway for recreational craft.

FARLEY CANDY COMPANY

The Farley Candy Company operates its main production facility on land bordering the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal near 31st Street and California Avenue. It owns several parcels of land off the river and leases riverfront property from the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District. The candy company does not presently use the riverfront area, but is subleasing docking space near the railroad bridge that crosses the canal on company property to Garvey Marine for a railroad-to-barge coal distribution operation. Farley also uses the railroad for receiving shipments of sugar and corn syrup for candy production. Both sides of the canal along this stretch are used by industries, and the shore is rocky riprap with some weed trees. The company opposes public use of the riverfront because of safety, security, and liability reasons. Because the company leases the land, it is reluctant to improve the land aesthetically and does not want to encourage employee use of the water for fishing or picnicking during lunch hours because of safety and liability concerns.

BUSINESSES NOT FORMALLY INTERVIEWED

The **A. Finkl and Sons Company** runs a heavy forge shop located on the North Branch on Southport Avenue near Armitage Avenue (2000 North). The shop parallels the river for about 300 feet, and although the site is not publicly accessible, the company planted trees on the riverbank and installed attractive lighting and a picnic area for its employees.

MISCELLANEOUS GROUPS

CHICAGO POLICE DEPARTMENT-MARINE UNIT

The Marine Unit is a group within the Special Functions Division of the Bureau of Operations Services at the Chicago Police Department's (CPD) Central Headquarters. The Marine Unit is responsible for 1) law enforcement, 2) search and rescue, and 3) public service and safety for municipal waters of the Chicago River (Main, South, and North Branches, North Shore Channel, Sanitary and Ship Canal, Calumet River) and Lake Michigan (27 miles of frontage up to 3 miles out). The Marine Unit has 6 boats, but because of staff cutbacks, only 3 boats are usually out at one time. Because of the heavy recreational use of the lake, most of the Marine Unit's work is concentrated along the lakefront. On summer weekends one boat regularly patrols the downtown section of the river, but unless there are special problems that cannot be handled by land units, the Marine Unit rarely makes it into the upper stretches of the North Branch and North Shore Channel or the Calumet and Cal-Sag Channels. The CPD's Marine Unit is a municipal entity that coordinates with the state Department of Natural Resources' Marine Unit and the federal Coast Guard that also patrol the river and lake. Their functions overlap to some extent (e.g., the Coast Guard has search and rescue duties, but also gets into pollution and licensing which

the CPD does not), but most parties agree there is simply not enough staffing overall to adequately address increasing safety, regulation, and enforcement problems.

MISCELLANEOUS GROUPS NOT FORMALLY INTERVIEWED

John Husar, Outdoors Writer for the Chicago Tribune, has long championed efforts to improve the Chicago River corridor for fishing, hunting, and other recreational and open space opportunities in his three-times-weekly “On the Outdoors” feature column. In addition, weekly “Fishing” and “Woods and Waters” reports he and others write in the Tribune often describe current fishing action and other activities and issues regarding the Chicago River corridor.

PART III CURRENT AND POTENTIAL RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

REACH 1 WEST FORK OF THE NORTH BRANCH

RESOURCE CHARACTER

Location: The West Fork of the North Branch begins in unincorporated Lake County, 1 mile south of West Deerfield Road (IL Hwy. 60) and just west of Interstate 94 (Figure 4.2). It continues south along the interstate through Lincolnshire, Bannockburn, and Riverwoods to the community of Deer-

field. There the river heads southeast, crossing the Lake-Cook County Line near Pfingsten Road. From here, the river flows through Northbrook, Glenview, and Morton Grove, where it meets the Middle Fork in the Chick Evans Golf Course (Forest Preserve District of Cook County) to form the main stem of the North Branch. Total length of the reach is around 14 miles.

Land Use/Land Cover: The West Fork flows primarily through residential areas, though significant sections of it are undeveloped or in public or private open space. Vegetative cover includes a mix of open and forested areas.

Channel Character: The West Fork is narrow, straight, and channelized through most of its length, except for its lower course through Cook County forest preserve lands. Its upper section can be very shallow, but the lower part is navigable by canoes and kayaks during periods of adequate flow.

CURRENT AND POTENTIAL RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE OPPORTUNITIES

Current and potential recreation and open space opportunities in Reach 1 are described in Table 4.4 from north to south and are keyed to Figures 4.2 and 4.3 with numbers in the first column of the table. Major activity types are discussed in the sections below.

Canoeing and Kayaking: During periods of adequate flow, the lower stretch of the West Fork can be canoed from downtown Glenview to its confluence with the North Branch at the Chick Evans Golf Course. There is a potential put-in near Waukegan Road. Navigability above downtown Glenview is uncertain.

TABLE 4.4
Current and potential recreation-open space opportunities, Reach 1
(See Figures 4.2 and 4.3 for site locations)

SITE NUMBER AND NAME	MUNICIPALITY/OWNERSHIP	ACCESS, FACILITIES/NOTES
1 Old Mill Road property	Lincolnshire/private	40 acre potential forest/wetland restoration site
2 Bannockburn Basin	Bannockburn /Lake County FPD	40 acre flood control site—no public access
3 Deerfield Golf Course	Deerfield/Deerfield Park District	135 acre public golf course
4 Somme Woods FP	Skokie Div./Cook County FPD	735 acre picnic, restoration sites
5 Northbrook open space	Northbrook/private	Private land
6 Meadowhill Park	Northbrook/Northbrook Park District	60 acre public park
7 Anetsburger Golf Course	Northbrook/private	16 acre golf course
8 Techny Basin	Northbrook/Divine Word Missionary Fathers	Private, proposed public access
9 Techny Basin	Glenview/Marathon U.S. Realities	283 acre, private, planned public access park and trail
10 Glenview Naval Air Station	Glenview/U.S. Government	1,188 acre; proposed closing could provide public access
11 Tall Trees Park	Glenview/Glenview Park District	4.5 acre public park
12 Sleepy Hollow Park	Glenview/Glenview Park District	7.5 acre public park
13 Riverside Park	Glenview/Glenview Park District	3.9 acre public park
14 Glenview Country Club	Glenview/private	Golf course
15 Chick Evans Golf Course	Skokie Division/Cook County FPD	167 acre public golf course

Abbreviations: FPD—Forest Preserve District; URP—Urban Resources Partnership of Chicago; MWRD—Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago.

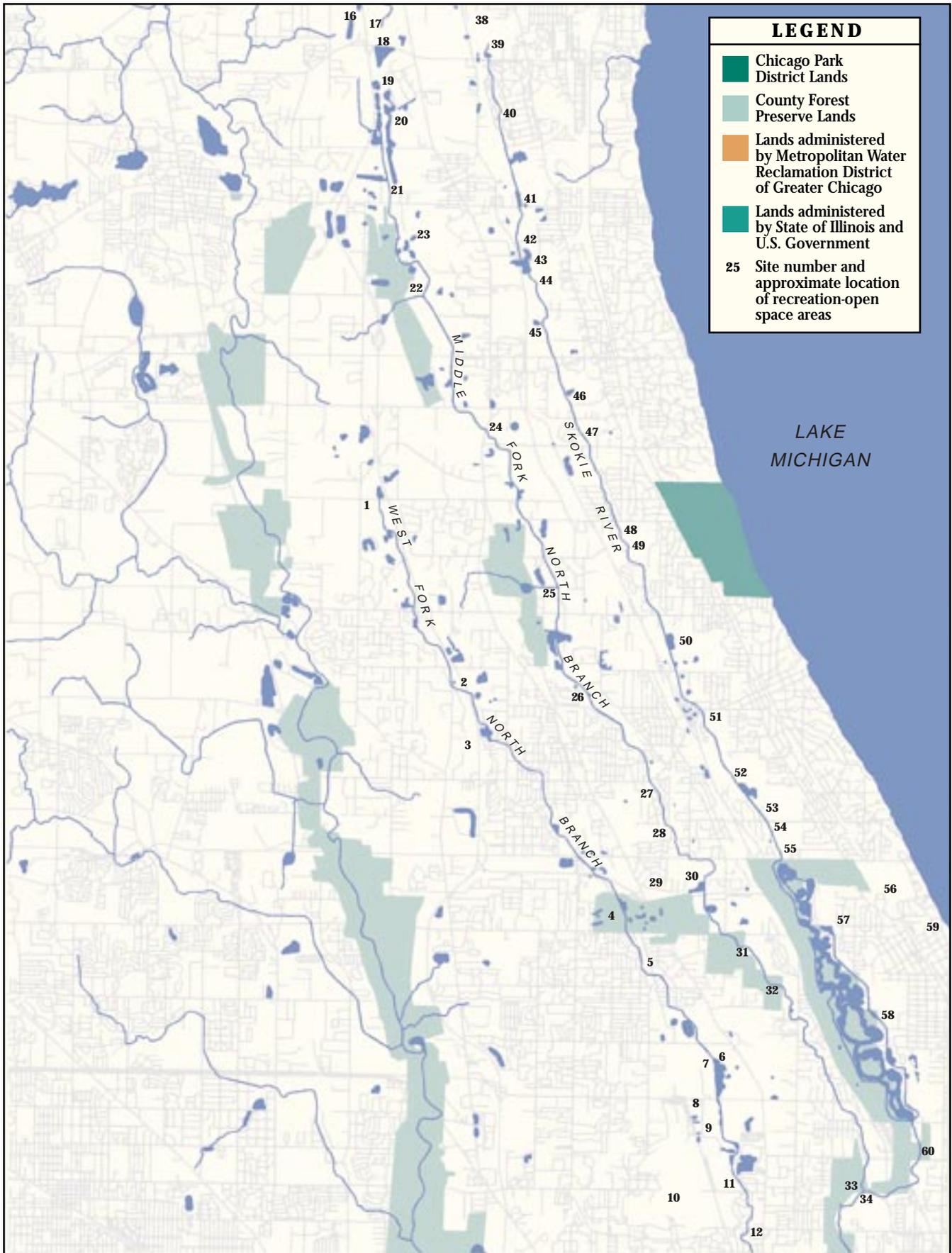


FIGURE 4.2
Current and potential recreation-open space opportunities, Reaches 1, 2 and 3

Fishing: Largemouth bass, bluegill, sunfish, and other species live in the river, but little fishing takes place. The sustainability of a recreational fishery under increased pressure is uncertain, especially in the upper stretches.

Trails: The Forest Preserve District of Cook County has bicycle, hiking, and horseback riding trails on its Somme Woods and Chick Evans sites, but no developed trails directly parallel the banks of the West Fork. Several trails outside the forest preserves were recently developed or are being planned along and near the river corridor. These projects all relate to the proposed 12-mile Techny Trail and Greenway system, and include a pathway through downtown Glenview; a bikeway along the river and Metra commuter rail right-of-way linking the North Branch Bicycle Trail with the communities of Morton Grove, Glenview, Golf, Northbrook, and Deerfield; and a trail following the river through the Techny Basin developments in Glenview and Northbrook.

Natural and Cultural Resource-Based Recreation and Education: The Somme Prairie Nature Preserve is a 70-acre dedicated Illinois Nature Preserve that includes the former floodplain of the now channelized West Fork. The site includes areas of very high quality prairie and Savanna, which are being managed and expanded by the forest preserve district with the help of volunteer stewards from the North Branch Prairie Project.

Other Recreation: Village parks in Northbrook and Glenview offer various active and passive recreation activities, and the river adds a natural element to the setting. A picnic grove at Somme Woods offers passive recreation, but is located one-half mile east of the West Fork. Two public and two private golf courses are also located along the West Fork.

REACH 2 MIDDLE FORK OF THE NORTH BRANCH

RESOURCE CHARACTER

Location: The Middle Fork of the North Branch begins in northern Lake County near Park City and flows south through Waukegan, North Chicago, Green Oaks, Lake Bluff, Lake Forest, Highland Park, Deerfield, Northbrook, and Northfield to its confluence with the Skokie River (East Fork), a length of about 21 miles (Figure 4.2). From this point, the river continues another 3 miles through Cook County forest preserve sites in Glenview and Morton Grove until it joins the West Fork to form the main stem of the North Branch.

Land Use/Vegetative Cover: The upper third of this reach (above Half Day Road, IL Highway 22) is a mix of low density residential, farm, and public open space, while the lower two-thirds is residential and public open space. The vegetative cover of public and private open space includes a diverse mix of forest, savanna, prairie, old field, wetland, mowed grass area, and agricultural fields. Some cultivated

fields in Lake County are being leased out by the forest preserve district to farmers until they are ready to be restored and/or developed for recreation.

Channel Character: The Middle Fork begins as a series of wetlands in a meandering river channel. Much of the Middle Fork floodplain south of Buckley Road (IL Highway 137), however, was modified long ago for agriculture, with the river channel ditched and the land laid with drainage tile. This narrow, straight channel is usually quite shallow, and in some places buckthorn and box elder crowd the river and hinder access; other typical bank trees include willow, silver maple, and elm.

CURRENT AND POTENTIAL RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE OPPORTUNITIES

Current and potential recreation and open space opportunities in Reach 2 are described in Table 4.5 from north to south and are keyed to Figure 4.2 with numbers in the first column of the table. Major activity types are discussed in the sections below.

Canoeing and Kayaking: The lower 3 miles of the Middle Fork from the Skokie River to the main stem of the North Branch is usually navigable by canoe or kayak. Above the Skokie River, the narrow channel is navigable to Winnetka Road, and perhaps further, during periods of adequate water.

Fishing: Species observed in this reach include northern pike, largemouth bass, carp, bluegill, and sunfish. Other than the Skokie Lagoons, the Middle Fork holds the highest potential for recreational fishing of the three forks of the North Branch, especially in its lower stretches. Currently, however, little fishing takes place.

Trails: The Forest Preserve District of Cook County has bicycle, hiking, and horseback riding trails on its sites along the lower stretch of the Middle Fork, and a developed trail circles the Somme Woods preserve. Lake County Forest Preserves has proposed developing a pedestrian nature trail on its Middle Fork Savanna site, providing access on the north and south ends. Future plans also include a northern extension of this trail to connect the district's other Middle Fork properties, and a western extension to connect with its Des Plaines River Trail. A trail may also be developed on the district's Lake Forest flood control site once the reservoir is constructed.

Natural and Cultural Resource-Based Recreation and Education: Lake County Forest Preserves' Middle Fork sites contain areas of exceptional plant and animal diversity, and are used for a variety of nature recreation and environmental education activities. The district is working with the non-profit Lake Forest Open Lands in the ecological restoration of the Middle Fork Savanna property, which may include the efforts of volunteer restorationists. The district has also worked with ChicagoRivers partners to identify areas within its holdings that would be likely candidates for wetland restoration. A site on its Lake Forest property has since been

TABLE 4.5
Current and potential recreation-open space opportunities, Reach 2
(See Figure 4.2 and 4.3 for site locations)

SITE NUMBER AND NAME	MUNICIPALITY/OWNERSHIP	ACCESS, FACILITIES/NOTES
16 Headwaters marsh	Park City/private	10 acre, private, potential wetland restoration site
17 Pritzker property	Waukegan/private	160 acre, private, potential wetland restoration site
18 Baxter land	Waukegan/Baxter Healthcare	76 acre, private, potential wetland restoration site
19 Wrigley tract	Waukegan/Abbot Labs	118 acre, private, potential wetland restoration site
20 Unnamed site	Green Oaks/Lake County FPD	14 acre, undeveloped natural area
21 Green Oaks	Green Oaks/Lake County FPD	69 acre flood control site
22 Middle Fork Savanna	Lake Forest/Lake County FPD	477 acre, undeveloped natural area
23 Knollwood Country Club	Lake Forest/private	260 acre private golf course
24 School District and recycling center	Lake Forest/public	34 acre potential wetland restoration site
25 Lake Forest/Prairie Wolf Slough	Lake Forest/Lake County FPD	431 acre, undeveloped flood control site; includes 28 acre URP/ ChicagoRivers demonstration project
26 Berkeley Prairie	Highland Park/Lake County FPD	18 acre natural area
27 Trail Tree Park	Deerfield/Deerfield Park District	5 acre public park
28 Green Briar Park	Deerfield/Deerfield Park District	19.5 acre public park
29 Middle Fork Reservoir	Northbrook/MWRD	320 acre flood control site
30 Green Acres Country Club	Northbrook/Northbrook Park District	60 acre public golf course
31 Chipilly Woods ¹	Skokie Division/Cook County FPD	Developed trail
32 Sunset Ridge Woods ¹	Skokie Division/Cook County FPD	Developed trail
33 Watersmeet ¹	Skokie Division/Cook County FPD	Potential wetland restoration site
34 Wilmette Golf Course	Wilmette/Wilmette Park District	105 acre public golf course and driving range
35 Blue Star Mem. Woods ¹	Skokie Division/Cook County FPD	Bike, developed trails
36 Glenview Woods ¹	Skokie Division/Cook County FPD	Bike, developed trails, restoration site
37 Harms Woods ¹	Skokie Division/Cook County FPD	Bike/developed/foot trails, 100 acre restoration site

¹Note: Forest Preserve District of Cook County does not break down acreage of holdings by site; approximate total acreage for its Middle Fork holdings is 1,626 acres. Abbreviations: FPD—Forest Preserve District; URP—Urban Resources Partnership of Chicago; MWRD—Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago.

designated a ChicagoRivers demonstration project, and partial funding to carry out the project has been received through a grant from the Urban Resources Partnership (URP). In Cook County’s Glenview Woods Forest Preserve, North Branch Restoration Project volunteers manage woodland, savanna, and wetland areas near the west bank of the Middle Fork. They are also working on a 100-acre woodland site at Harms Woods that includes mesic and wet communities.

Other Recreation: The Forest Preserve District of Cook County maintains picnic groves at its Somme Woods, Chipilly Woods, Blue Star Memorial Woods, Glenview Woods, and Harms Woods sites. Harms Woods, the largest of these recreation areas, offers picnic shelters and access to the North Branch Bicycle Trail. One private and three public golf courses are also located on or near the Middle Fork.

REACH 3 SKOKIE RIVER (EAST FORK OF THE NORTH BRANCH)

RESOURCE CHARACTER

Location: The Skokie River (East Fork of the North Branch) begins in northern Lake County near Park City, and flows south through the suburbs of Lake Bluff, Lake Forest, Highland Park, Northfield, Glencoe, Forest Preserve District of Cook County lands, Winnetka, and Wilmette, where it joins with the Middle Fork (Figure 4.2). Total length of this reach is about 17 miles.

Land Use/Vegetative Cover: The Skokie River is the most developed of the three forks of the North Branch and has the least amount of land in public open space. Land use is primarily residential, except for the large Greenbelt and Skokie

Lagoons forest preserve tracts at the northern and southern ends of the river. Significant acreage in private open space properties, however, helps maintain the natural integrity of the corridor as a greenway; these properties include conservancy lands in Lake County and several country club golf courses in Lake and Cook Counties. The vegetative cover of public and private open space includes woodland, wetland, and mowed grass.

Channel Character: The Skokie River was once an extensive system of wetlands from the headwaters down through what is now the Skokie Lagoons. Most of these wetlands disappeared after the floodplain was drained and filled, the river was channelized, and the Skokie Lagoons were constructed in a massive Civilian Conservation Corps project during the 1930s. Today, a small portion of the original headwaters wetlands exists in Lake County's Greenbelt Forest Preserve. Between there and the Skokie Lagoons, the river is narrow and channelized, and runs very shallow except after large rains. The Lagoons area itself includes 7 pools and more than 190 acres of water, with shoreland banks and islands that combine wild nature and groomed spaces to create a picturesque effect. Ongoing restoration projects include dredging the Lagoons and restocking them with fish, and restoring the natural character of the Skokie River channel through the Chicago Botanic Gardens. Both projects include ecological restoration of shoreline vegetation. Below the Lagoons, the river widens and deepens, and follows its natural stream course to its confluence with the Middle Fork.

CURRENT AND POTENTIAL RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE OPPORTUNITIES

Current and potential recreation and open space opportunities in Reach 3 are described in Table 4.6 from north to south and are keyed to Figure 4.2 with numbers in the first column of the table. Major activity types are discussed in the following sections.

Boating: The river above the Skokie Lagoons is very narrow and is not navigable by even small craft during most of the year. The Skokie Lagoons, however, offers a variety of boating experiences, including canoeing, kayaking, sailing, and row-boating, and is perhaps the most popular area in the entire Chicago River corridor for non-motorized boating (electric trolling motors are also allowed). As part of the Skokie Lagoons restoration project, a new boat launch facility has been constructed, and portageways have been improved on two of the three low head dams. Not including the Botanic Garden, it is about a 7-mile trip around the Lagoons. There is no improved portageway at the main control dam between the Lagoons and the lower channel of the Skokie River (at Willow Rd.), but portaging between the two is possible. From the Lagoons to its confluence with the Middle Fork, the Skokie River is navigable by canoe and kayak, except during periods of low water. A dam near Winnetka Road is somewhat difficult to portage around.

Fishing: At the headwaters of the Skokie River, the Greenbelt Forest Preserve has two 6-acre fishing ponds that are stocked for shore fishing with largemouth bass, channel catfish, and bluegill. The river between Greenbelt and the Skokie Lagoons does not have a consistent, adequate flow to sustain a recreational fishery. However, the Skokie Lagoons offers some of the best and most popular fishing opportunities in the Chicago River corridor. Shoreline vegetation is managed in part to allow access for bank fishing, which is probably the most common fishing method on the Lagoons. Areas around the dams of the Lagoons are particularly attractive fishing spots. As part of the restoration, rough fish were removed and the Lagoons were restocked with largemouth bass, walleye, northern pike, channel catfish, bluegill, and sunfish. A 14-inch limit on bass will help improve the sustainability of the fishery, and catch-and-release fishing is being encouraged. Fishing below the Lagoons is rare, but children fish along the shore occasionally. Species include carp, bull-head, largemouth bass, and bluegill.

Trails: The Greenbelt Forest Preserve has 5 miles of looped gravel trails for hiking, bicycling, cross-county skiing, and other trail activities. The Lake Bluff flood control site currently has an informal trails network through it, and the Village of Lake Bluff, Lake Bluff Open Lands, and Lake Forest Open Lands are interested in linking this site with trails to properties to the north and south. The Forest Preserve District of Cook County's 20-mile-long North Branch Bicycle Trail begins at the north entrance to the Chicago Botanic Garden, where it shares a service drive for 1.2 miles to the south entrance. The Botanic Garden also has many paths that wind through its outdoor garden displays, including its Skokie River ecological restoration project. Below the Botanic Garden, the North Branch Bicycle Trail follows a dedicated off-road route, paralleling the Lagoons and the river below. The Lagoons area also has hiking and horse trails.

A proposed extension from the northern terminus of the North Branch Bicycle Trail eastward along Lake-Cook Road would connect it with the Green Bay Trail, a rail-trail that runs south to Wilmette and north, joining other trails all the way to the Wisconsin border.

Natural and Cultural Resource-Based Recreation and Education: The Greenbelt Forest Preserve has been the site of extensive restoration of wetland, savanna, and prairie ecosystems. At the site, Lake County Forest Preserves is developing an interpretive trail that will tell the story of the Skokie River: its historical nature, past human degradation, and current efforts to restore it. The Chicago Botanic Garden is one of the key environmental education centers of the Forest Preserve District of Cook County. Managed in cooperation with the Chicago Horticultural Society, the Botanic Garden has hosted several meetings focusing on the Chicago River. Its Skokie River Restoration Project is a recent endeavor to stabilize eroding streambanks and restore the ecological function of the river. The project will have a public education component and will be readily accessible to the hundreds of

thousands who visit the Botanic Garden annually. Restoration of the historic natural and designed landscape of the Skokie Lagoons area is another concern of the forest preserve district; professional, community, and public groups are participating in planning and design exercises for the area. The Lagoons have long been a popular site for birding, viewing wildlife and spring flora, and other nature-related recreation activities, and the restoration projects mentioned above should increase these opportunities. Below the Lagoons, volunteers from the North Branch Restoration Project recently began work to restore a sedge meadow community along the river.

Other Recreation: The Greenbelt Forest Preserve is the most developed of all of the Lake County Forest Preserves sites in the Chicago River corridor. Because of its proximity to Waukegan, Park City, and North Chicago, the site receives heavy use by a diverse clientele for a variety of active and passive activities. The Skokie Lagoons Forest Preserve contains a designated picnic area with shelters, and also is used for various other recreational activities. Finally, 12 golf courses, most of them private country clubs, are located near the river.

TABLE 4.6
Current and potential recreation-open space opportunities, Reach 3
(See Figure 4.2 for site locations)

SITE NUMBER AND NAME	MUNICIPALITY/OWNERSHIP	ACCESS, FACILITIES/NOTES
38 Greenbelt Forest Preserve	Park City/Lake County FPD	536 acre full-service facility
39 Foss Park Golf Course	unincorporated/public	178 acre public golf course
40 Great Lakes Naval Center	Lake Bluff/U.S. Government	1,800 acre, government
41 Lake Bluff Country Club	Lake Bluff/Lake Bluff Pk. District	120 acre public golf course
42 Skokie River Nature Area	Lake Bluff/Village Lake Bluff, leased Lake Bluff Open Lands	125 acre proposed nature trails
43 Lake Bluff site	Lake Bluff/Lake County FPD	85 acre, undeveloped flood control site, informal trails
44 Lake Forest Open Lands site	Lake Forest/Lake Forest Open Lands Association	Nature trails
45 Deerpath Golf Course/Park	Lake Forest/public	134 acre golf course and park
46 Deerpath Play Field	Lake Forest/Village Lake Forest	26 acre, park facilities
47 Onwentsia Club	Lake Forest/private	203 acre private golf course
48 Centennial Park	Highland /Pk. District of Highland Park	65 acre, park facilities
49 Old Elm Golf Course	Highland Park/private	175 acre golf course
50 G.M. Kushing property	Highland Park/private	34 acre, private, potential wetland restoration site
51 Highland Park Country Club	Highland Park/private	109 acre golf course
52 Sunset Valley Golf Course	Highland Park/public	149 acre golf course
53 Bob-O-Link Golf Course	Highland Park/private	165 acre golf course
54 Larry Fink Park	Highland Park/Park District of Highland Park	71 acre park, potential wetland restoration site
55 Northmore Country Club	Highland Park/private	265 acre golf course
56 Glencoe Golf Course	Glencoe/private (public access)	126 acre golf course
57 Chicago Botanic Garden	Skokie Division/Cook County FPD	280 acre gardens, education center, restoration site
58 Skokie Lagoons	Skokie Division/Cook County FPD	400 acre, bike, horse, hiking trails; boat launch, picnic areas; 2 potential wetland restoration sites
59 Skokie Playfield Golf Course	Winnetka/private	165 acre golf course
60 Unnamed forest preserve, including the Skokie Sedge Meadow ¹	Skokie Division/Cook County FPD	Bike and horse trails; 20 acre sedge meadow restoration site

¹ Note: The Forest Preserve District of Cook County does not break down the acreage of its holdings by site; approximate total acreage for its Skokie River holdings is 1,489 acres. Abbreviations: FPD—Forest Preserve District; URP—Urban Resources Partnership of Chicago; MWRD—Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago.

REACH 4 NORTH SHORE CHANNEL

RESOURCE CHARACTER

Location: The North Shore Channel flows south from the locks (closed to boat traffic) at Wilmette Harbor on Lake Michigan through the suburbs of Wilmette, Evanston, Skokie, and Lincolnwood to the City of Chicago, where it ends at its confluence with the North Branch of the Chicago River just south of Foster Avenue (Figure 4.3). The total length of this reach is 17.5 miles.

Land Use/Vegetative Cover: The corridor of the North Shore Channel is owned by the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago. Properties along the corridor are leased primarily to park districts, except for isolated parcels that are in institutional, industrial, and commercial use. Open space parcels are generally wooded along the banks, with mowed lawn and scattered trees on the level ground above the banks.

Channel Character: Although the banks of the river appear very natural, the dominating straightness of the channel and steepness of its banks leave little doubt that this is a human-created waterway. Average width of the channel is about 150 feet, and the depth is about 8 feet.

CURRENT AND POTENTIAL RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE OPPORTUNITIES

Current and potential recreation and open space opportunities in Reach 4 are described in Table 4.7 from north to south, and are keyed to Figure 4.3 with numbers in the first column of the table. Major activity types are discussed in the following sections.

Boating: The North Shore Channel is navigable by both non-motorized and motorized recreational boats. Access by both types, however, is difficult; the steep, wooded slopes and frequent fencing block access by canoes and kayaks through much of the reach, and there are no launch facilities anywhere on the channel for motorboats. Those who paddle the channel will usually put in at the grounds of the Bahai

TABLE 4.7
Current and potential recreation-open space opportunities, Reach 4
(See Figure 4.3 for site locations)

SITE NUMBER AND NAME	MUNICIPALITY/OWNERSHIP	ACCESS, FACILITIES/NOTES
61 Gilson Park/Wilmette Harbor/Yacht Club	Wilmette/MWRD-Wilmette Park District	60 acre full service park; yacht club, no river access
62 Jans Community Golf Course	Evanston-Wilmette/MWRD Evanston-Wilmette Park District	90 acre public golf course
63 Chandler Park	Evanston/MWRD-Evanston	3.2 acre neighborhood park
64 Leahy Park	Evanston/MWRD-Evanston	4 acre neighborhood park
65 Ladd Arboretum	Evanston/MWRD-Evanston	18 acre arboretum
66 Evanston Ecology Center	Evanston/MWRD-Evanston	4 acre environmental education center
67 Canal Lands Park	Evanston/MWRD-Evanston	4 acre neighborhood park
68 Mc Cormick Park	Evanston/MWRD-Evanston	3 acre neighborhood park
69 Eggelston Park	Evanston/MWRD-Evanston	2 acre playground
70 Twiggs Park	Evanston/MWRD-Evanston	9 acre neighborhood park
71 Butler Park	Evanston/MWRD-Evanston	11 acre neighborhood park
72 Beck Park	Evanston/MWRD-Evanston	5.5 acre neighborhood park
73 Fel-Pro Park/Northshore Sculpture Park	Skokie/MWRD-Skokie Park District	29 acre bike and jogging trails; sculpture park
74 Canal Lands Park	Evanston/MWRD-Evanston	6.9 acre neighborhood park
75 Harbert Park	Evanston/MWRD-Evanston	6.6 acre neighborhood park
76 Canal park	Lincolnwood/MWRD-Lincolnwood	25 acres, passive use
77 U.S. Army Reserve	Lincolnwood/MWRD-U.S. Government	Vehicle parking
78 Thillens Field	Lincolnwood/MWRD-private	Baseball fields
79 U.S. Army Reserve	Chicago/MWRD	Training center
80 Devon Aeration Station	Chicago/MWRD	No access
81 Canal park	Chicago/MWRD	River path
82 Legion Park	Chicago/MWRD-Chicago Park District	48.35 acre bike trail, playlot, ballcourts and fields
83 U.S. Army/Marine Reserves	Chicago/MWRD	Training center
84 River Park (part)	Chicago/MWRD-Chicago Park District	30 acre full service park, trail

Abbreviations: FPD—Forest Preserve District; URP—Urban Resources Partnership of Chicago; MWRD—Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago.

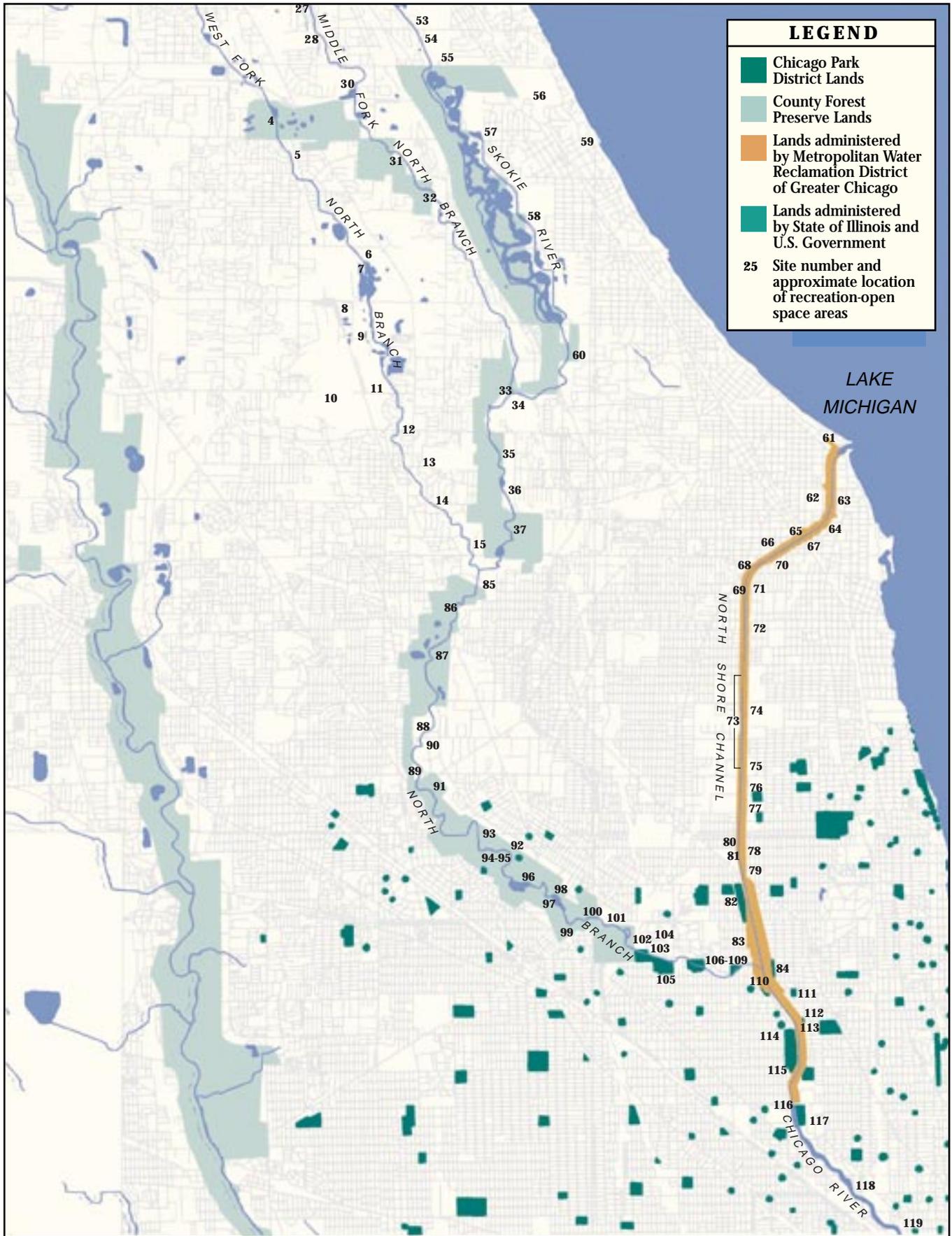


FIGURE 4.3
Current and potential recreation-open space opportunities, Reaches 4 and 5A

Temple in Wilmette or at Oakton Avenue in Skokie. A dock behind the Evanston Ecology Center was used in the past by a voyageur canoe club and has been used more recently by the Chicago River Aquatic Center for its Iron Oars Rowing Marathon, but the dock itself is not open to regular public use. Water turbulence caused by an aeration facility at Devon Avenue warrants some caution from paddlers; otherwise, the relatively flat water of the channel makes it easy to paddle in either direction. Motorboats using the North Shore Channel come up from the North Branch and must return that way.

Fishing: Bank fishing and fishing boats are occasionally spotted along the North Shore Channel, but such sightings are uncommon, except near the confluence of the channel with the North Branch. Overall, the recreational fishery is viewed as limited but improving.

Trails: Segments of a bike trail network exist in channel parks in Evanston, Skokie, and Chicago, but the system lacks continuity. Some sections of this 7-mile paved trail were routed in a serpentine design, making it tedious for bicyclists. In addition to the bike path in Skokie, there is a cinder jogging path.

The Chicago section of the trail was recently improved as a bicycle route, and there are plans to link all trail segments to form a continuous trail system along the North Shore Channel. This trail would link with the North Branch Riverwalk to the south (see Reach 5) and with the Green Bay Trail and Evanston lakefront bikeway to the north.

Natural and Cultural Resource-Based Recreation and Education: The Evanston Ecology Center and Ladd Arboretum provide a variety of indoor and outdoor environmental education opportunities for Evanston residents. Although the wooded part of the corridor is a very narrow band along the banks, it provides sufficient habitat for small mammals and birds to make it a popular area for wildlife observation.

Other Recreation: The parks along the North Shore Channel provide some facilities for active recreation, but the narrowness of the corridor precludes extensive development. Most use remains passive. The Jans Community Golf Course provides public golfing opportunities for residents of Evanston and Wilmette.

REACH 5 NORTH BRANCH OF THE CHICAGO RIVER

RESOURCE CHARACTER

Location: The main stem of the North Branch of the Chicago River begins just south of Golf Rd. in Morton Grove, where the Middle and West Forks come together in Cook County's Chick Evans Forest Preserve Golf Course (Figures 4.3 and 4.4). The North Branch continues south through the suburb of Niles, then turns east and flows through Chicago's northwest side neighborhoods to its confluence with the North Shore Channel just south of Foster Avenue. This upper

section of the North Branch (Reach 5a) is about 10 miles long. From this junction, the lower section of the North Branch (Reach 5b) turns southeastward and flows another 7 miles until it meets the Main Branch and South Branch at Wolf Point in downtown Chicago.

Land Use/Vegetative Cover: The upper North Branch lies predominantly within an open space corridor of forest preserves, parks, and cemeteries, with some residential and school properties just above its confluence with the North Shore Channel. Open space land cover is predominantly wooded through the forest preserve sites and mowed grass with scattered trees where the river flows through parks and institutional grounds. Below the North Shore Channel, the river flows through a series of large and small parks and the Ravenswood and Albany Park neighborhoods; it then becomes largely commercial and industrial through the rest of its course. Open space land use is mostly mowed grass with scattered trees and hardscape.

Channel Character: The banks and channel of the North Branch remain natural in character through the forest preserves, although in places stormwater outfalls, runoff, and resulting periods of high and low water have scoured and denuded the banks. The river has adequate flow through much of the year except through LaBagh Woods, where it can get shallow during periods of low flow. Below LaBagh Woods, the riverbanks have been cut vertically and lined with stone, and the river is fenced off through most of the Chicago Park District parks. There is a 4-foot dam on the North Branch where it meets the North Shore Channel; it is known as Chicago's only "waterfall." Below the confluence, the river widens and deepens, the banks are somewhat higher, and the bank slope is steeply inclined in some places and a vertical cement or steel wall in other places, especially along the lower part of the subreach. At North Avenue the river widens to form a turning basin, and the channel splits to form Goose Island. The human-created North Branch Canal flows shallow around the east side of the island, then rejoins the main channel above Chicago Avenue

CURRENT AND POTENTIAL RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE OPPORTUNITIES

Current and potential recreation and open space opportunities in Reach 5 are described in Table 4.8 from north to south, and are keyed to Figures 4.3 and 4.4 with numbers in the first column of the table. Major activity types are discussed in the following sections.

Boating: The river is accessible by canoe and kayak for most of the year. Low water, especially through the LaBagh Woods Forest Preserve, may require paddlers to wade or portage some sections. Fallen logs or other vegetative obstructions might also require wading or portaging for short distances; major obstructions are usually cleared once a year. A low dam south of Howard Street can be hazardous to those who try to run it. A 4-foot dam located where the North Branch meets the North Shore Channel must be portaged. Below this point, the North Branch is wide and deep, and navigable by motor-

TABLE 4.8
Current and potential recreation-open space opportunities, Reach 5
(See Figures 4.3 and 4.4 for site locations)

SITE NUMBER AND NAME	MUNICIPALITY/OWNERSHIP	ACCESS, FACILITIES/NOTES
85 Linne Woods ¹	North Branch Division/Cook County FPD	Picnic grove, bike and horse trails
86 Wayside Woods ¹	North Branch Division/Cook County FPD	Picnic grove, bike trail, restoration site
87 St. Paul Woods ¹	North Branch Division/Cook County FPD	Picnic groves
88 Miami Woods/Indigo Oak Openings ¹	North Branch Division/Cook County FPD	Picnic grove, bike trail, restoration sites
89 Unnamed forest preserve ¹	North Branch Division/Cook County FPD	Bike trail
90 Tam Golf Course	Niles/Niles Park District	9-hole public golf course
91 Bunker Hill/Yates Flatwoods ¹	North Branch Division/Cook County FPD	Picnic groves, bike trail, restoration sites
92 Caldwell Woods ¹	North Branch Division/Cook County FPD	Picnic grove, bike trail
93 Whealan Pool ¹	North Branch Division/Cook County FPD	Swimming pool
94 Edgebrook Golf Course ¹	North Branch Division/Cook County FPD	Golf course
95 Quinn Park	Chicago/Chicago Park District	.76 acre passive park
96 Edgebrook Woods ¹	North Branch Division/Cook County FPD	Picnic grove
97 Indian Road Woods ¹	North Branch Division/Cook County FPD	Picnic grove
98 Billy Caldwell Golf Course ¹	North Branch Division/Cook County FPD	Golf course
99 Forest Glen Woods ¹	North Branch Division/Cook County FPD	Picnic grove
100 Sauganash Prairie Grove ¹	North Branch Division/Cook County FPD	Restoration site
101 LaBagh Woods ¹	North Branch Division/Cook County FPD	Picnic grove
102 St. Lucas Cemetery	Chicago/private	Cemetery
103 Gompers Park	Chicago/Chicago Park District	39 acre full service park, river path, fishing pond, URP/ChicagoRivers wetland demonstration project
104 Bohemian National Cemetery	Chicago/private	Cemetery
105 Eugene Field Park	Chicago/Chicago Park District	12.78 acre full service park, river path
106 Von Steuben High School	Chicago/Chicago Public Schools	Playfields
107 Kiwanis Playground Park	Chicago/Chicago Park District	2.05 acre, playcourts
108 North Park College	Chicago/private	Campus riverwalk
109 North Park College	Chicago/private	Playfield
110 Ronan Park	Chicago/MWRD-Chicago Park District	11.01 acre park, bike path
111 Pumping Station	Chicago/MWRD	Passive recreation
112 Jacob Park	Chicago/Chicago Park District	.39 acre playlot
113 Sunken Gardens Park	Chicago/Chicago Park District	.16 acre passive recreation area
114 Horner Park	Chicago/Chicago Park District	58.84 acre full service park, bike path
115 California Park	Chicago/Chicago Park District	13.52 acre full service park and bike path
116 Gordon Tech. High School	Chicago/private	Private, undeveloped river bank
117 Clark Park	Chicago/MWRD-Chicago Park District	9.76 acre passive recreation area
118 Lathrop Homes	Chicago/Chicago Housing Authority	Potential river edge treatment and environmental education project
119 A. Finkl and Sons	Chicago/private	Employee passive recreation area
120 Turning basin overlook	Chicago/private	Public access; passive recreation area
121 Montgomery Ward	Chicago/private	Employee passive recreation area
122 Chicago Tribune Freedom Center	Chicago/private	Employee passive recreation area
123 East Bank Club	Chicago/private	Private dock-level walkway
124 Park #444	Chicago/Chicago Pk. Dist.-City of Chicago	.89 acre passive recreation area

¹Note: Forest Preserve District of Cook County does not break down acreage of holding by site; approximate total acreage for its North Branch holdings is 1,823 acres. Abbreviations: FPD—Forest Preserve District; URP—Urban Resources Partnership of Chicago; MWRD—Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago.

boats. An exception to this is the east channel around Goose Island, which is only about 2 feet deep. Some riparian residents in the Ravenswood neighborhood have appropriated MWRD riverfront property as their own and have constructed boat docks for private access to the river. Commercial boats and barges come north as far as Belmont Avenue, though traffic is not as heavy as on reaches to the south. Several private boat yards along the lower section of the North Branch cater to larger motor and sail boats as a place for winter storage.

Fishing: A stocked fishing pond at Gompers Park is popular with children and adults for panfish and catfish. A 1-day event developed by the Chicago Police Department called “Get Hooked on Fishing, Not on Drugs” introduced more than 200 children to fishing at the park during its second (1995) season of operation. The “waterfall” dam, where the North Branch meets the North Shore Channel, is a popular fishing spot on the North Branch. Some fish the area by boat, but most access it from River Park, where the waterfall is located. This access is not sanctioned by the park district, and anglers must climb under the fence and stand atop the dam or on the steep shoreline below the dam. Bullhead and carp are common species caught. The site is used mainly by an ethnically diverse group of local male youths.

Trails: The Forest Preserve District of Cook County’s North Branch Bicycle Trail continues along the main stem of the North Branch from points northward and terminates at the Bunker Hill/Edgebrook Flatwoods natural areas near the intersection of Devon and Caldwell Aves. in Chicago. Road signs provide bicyclists with street connections between the North Branch Trail and the Chicago Lakefront Path. Paved pathways wind along the river through the Chicago Park District’s larger river parks on the North Branch; at River Park the trail connects with a discontinuous trail system along the North Shore Channel. The forest preserve district has proposed extending the North Branch Trail south from its current terminus through LaBagh Woods to Gompers Park. Friends of the Chicago River, together with other groups and agencies, have developed a conceptual plan for developing a North Branch Riverwalk that would link the LaBagh Woods Forest Preserve, Chicago Park District river parks (Gompers, Eugene Field, River, Ronan) and other properties with a continuous trail. The Friends of the Chicago River has also produced a set of walking tour maps that cover a major portion of the Chicago River corridor within the city; for the North Branch, the route begins on the north at LaBagh and Clayton Smith Woods Forest Preserves, and follows dirt paths along the river, streets, sidewalks, park paths, and alleys to Wolf Point in downtown Chicago. The lowermost part of the North Branch has been incorporated within a plan for a downtown riverwalk (see description under Reach 6).

Natural and Cultural Resource-Based Recreation and Education: The forest preserves of the main stem of the North Branch have the greatest concentration of ecological restoration sites in the Chicago region. North Branch Restoration Project volunteers assist in managing seven sites

along this reach, most of which touch the banks of the river. The forest preserves on this reach also offer great opportunities for birding and other wildlife observation, on both an organized and informal basis. The North Branch as it flows through the city of Chicago also offers opportunities for children to explore urban nature. Children are often seen along the banks of the river in the forest preserves and where the river is accessible from adjacent neighborhoods. A frequently flooded portion of Gompers Park has been identified as a ChicagoRivers demonstration project for wetland restoration, and ChicagoRivers partners are working with the Chicago Park District, the Department of Environment, and other groups to implement the project. The project has received funding under the Urban Resources Partnership (URP) grant program.

Other Recreation: The parks and forest preserves of this reach offer a full range of active and passive recreation opportunities, from golfing and swimming to toboggan slides and indoor sports. Several companies along the North Branch have developed private open space facilities for their employees to use in their free time; a few of these are accessible to the public.

REACH 6 CHICAGO RIVER (MAIN BRANCH)

RESOURCE CHARACTER

Location: The Chicago River (Main Branch) begins at Lake Michigan and flows west to Wolf Point, a distance of 1.4 miles (Figure 4.4). Here it joins the North and South Branches, which both flow south.

Land Use/Vegetative Cover: Flowing through the heart of downtown Chicago and the city’s newly developing New East Side, the Chicago River has become a focal point for high-rise commercial office, hotel, and residential development. The concrete canyon formed by new and older development, however, is being planned around an open space river edge that is publicly accessible. This open space is mainly hardscape plazas and riverwalks, except for two areas: South Bank Park between Lake Shore Drive and Michigan Avenue, which has mowed grass and scattered trees, and Wolf Point, which has a wooded river edge backed by a mowed lawn. A large undeveloped parcel just south of the river and west of Lake Shore Drive has been converted to a golf course as an interim use.

Channel Character: The Chicago River has been widened and deepened to serve the commercial functions of the large metropolitan city and can receive large ships and barges as well as tour boats and smaller recreational craft. The channel is straight except for a slight s-curve at Michigan Avenue, where the canyon of high-rises opens up to afford a dramatic view of the river embraced by the historic Wrigley and Tribune Tower buildings—an urban space that has been called one of the most spectacular of any American city. The eight bascule bridges between Michigan Avenue and Wolf Point have become symbols of the river downtown. The river

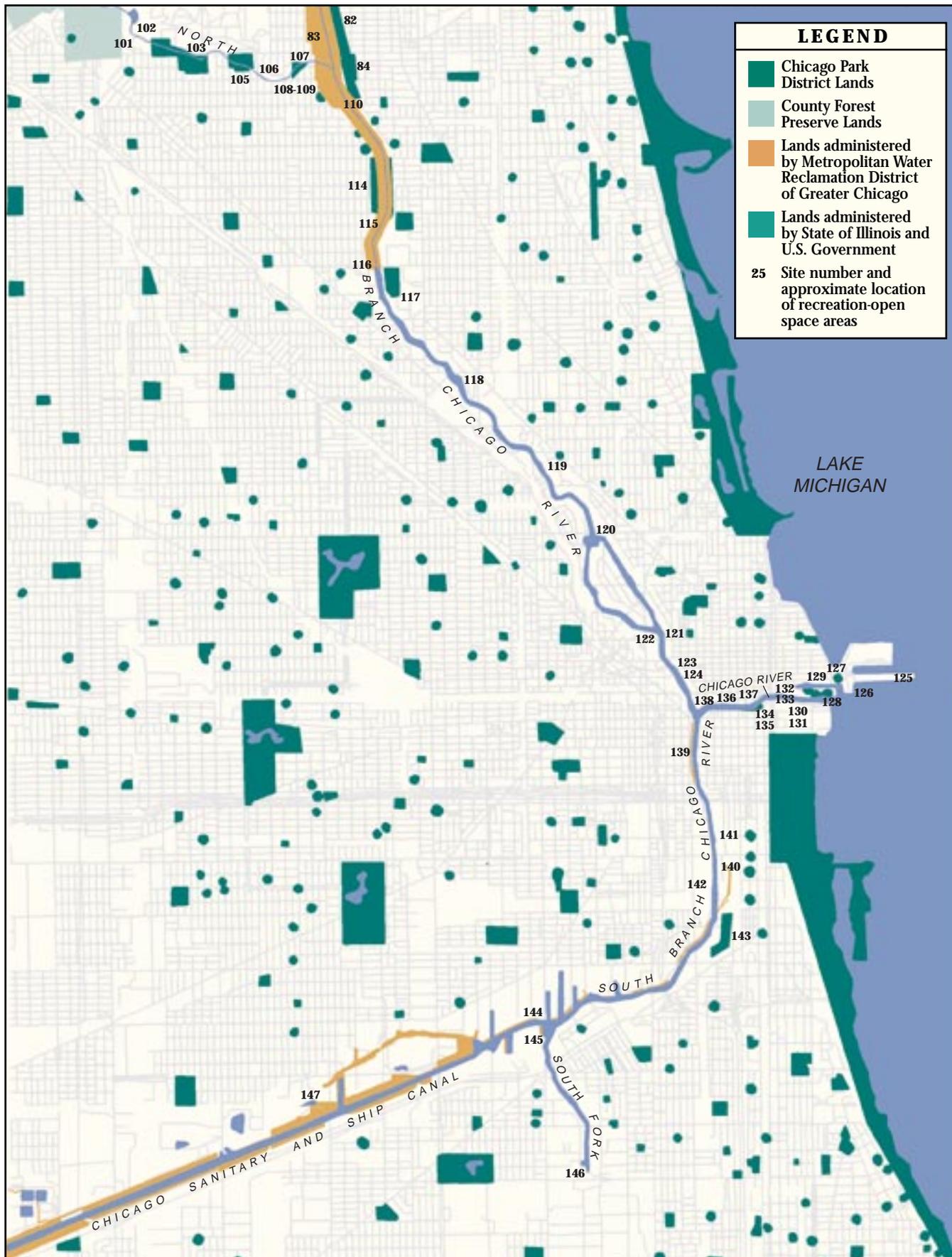


FIGURE 4.4
Current and potential recreation-open space opportunities, Reaches 5B, 6 and 7

edge is for the most part a vertical wall of concrete or steel sheet piling, except for Wolf Point, which has a gradually sloped, vegetated edge. At the mouth of the river, a lock provides access to Lake Michigan and the river widens on its south bank to form a turning basin known as the Inner Harbor. On the north bank is Ogden Slip, which once served commercial ships but is now used primarily by recreational boats.

CURRENT AND POTENTIAL RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE OPPORTUNITIES

Current and potential recreation and open space opportunities in Reach 6 are described in Table 4.9 from east to west, and are keyed to Figure 4.4 with numbers in the first column of the table. Major activity types are discussed in the sections below.

Boating: The Chicago River is a center of activity for a variety of recreational boating opportunities. Several excursion boat companies are based along the river, primarily near Michigan Avenue and at Ogden Slip, and offer tours of the river and lake on a regular basis during the summer. The Chicago River Aquatic Center is housed in the old Coast Guard Station, and its members use their rowing shells on the river on a daily basis in the early morning hours. Motorboats ply the waters of the Main Branch in large numbers on summer weekends, touring the river, moving through the locks out to the lake, or docking in the Inner Harbor and at Ogden Slip. Canoes and kayaks are rarely seen on this reach, but North Pier and Wolf Point have been used as access points for small paddle boats. All these recreational uses over-

lay commercial shipping, which has declined in its use of the Main Branch but remains an important function of the river.

Fishing: Fishing is becoming increasingly popular on the Chicago River, both by boat and from shore. Twenty different species have been caught here, including small and large-mouth bass, white and yellow perch, white crappie, channel and blue catfish, rock and white bass, trout, salmon, and smelt. In the winter of 1992-1993, North Pier Chicago installed water aerators in Ogden Slip to keep the water from freezing to protect their floating restaurant docks; this open water attracted both fish and anglers in large numbers. Very good fishing has also been reported along the south bank between the Michigan Avenue bridge and Columbus Dr. In this popular fishing spot, anglers have devised special bank fishing techniques to avoid having their lines snapped by the busy barge and pleasure boat traffic. In addition to these activities, fishing derbies are also being held on the Chicago River. In 1988 and 1993, a part of the river was netted off and stocked with tagged fish (rainbow trout in the first derby, catfish and largemouth bass in the second), and for a fee contestants could fish off floating barges for prizes. The 1993 derby was sponsored by the Mayor’s Office in cooperation with the Chicago Riverwalk Corporation and member hotels and businesses along the river. A more recent tournament, “The Chicago Carp Classic,” had its first year in 1994 with 21 contestants. This tournament aims to showcase the Chicago River downtown and the premiere carp fishery there, and hopes to draw attention from those in countries like England where the carp is a revered gamefish species.

TABLE 4.9
Current and potential recreation-open space opportunities, Reach 6
(See Figure 4.4 for site locations)

SITE NUMBER AND NAME	MUNICIPALITY/OWNERSHIP	ACCESS, FACILITIES/NOTES
125 Navy Pier	Chicago/Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority	Waterfront park, festival, event, and market place
126 Old Coast Guard Station	Chicago/City of Chicago	Access for police marine unit and Chicago River Aquatic Center
127 Du Sable Park	Chicago/Chicago Park District	3.24 acre park under development
128 Turning Basin Marina and Gateway Park	Chicago/Chicago Park District	Proposed marina and park around turning basin
129 North Pier Terminal	Chicago/North Pier Chicago	Retail/entertainment; river promenade & restaurants
130 South Bank Park (Chicago Riverwalk Shore Dr. to Michigan Avenue)	Chicago/MWRD-Illinois Center	Dock-level walkway and landscaping; street-level walkway; good bank fishing
131 Illinois Center Golf Course	Chicago/Illinois Center	9-hole par golf course (interim use)
132 River Esplanade Park (North bank Lake Shore Drive to Columbus Drive)	Chicago/Chicago Park District	1.13 acre landscaped riverwalk
133 Centennial Fountain	Chicago/MWRD	Park and water fountain/arc
134 Du Sable cabin site	Chicago/City of Chicago	Recorded archaeological site
135 Ft. Dearborn historical marker	Chicago/City of Chicago	Brass sidewalk markers show original location
136 Chicago Riverwalk (Michigan Avenue to Wolf Point)	Chicago/private	Discontiguous dock- and street-level walkways/plaza
137 Marina City	Chicago/Marina City	Marina
138 Wolf Point	Chicago/Apparel Mart	Natural edge, passive use

Abbreviations: FPD—Forest Preserve District; URP—Urban Resources Partnership of Chicago; MWRD—Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago.

Trails: The Chicago Riverwalk Corporation is spearheading the effort to develop a continuous river edge walkway from the river mouth to Wolf Point, and on the North and South Branches in the downtown area. The Chicago Riverwalk would connect with the Chicago Lakefront Path, which runs north and south along the lakefront parks for 20 miles. The riverwalk would be at dock level where feasible, and dock- and street-level walkways, landscaping, and amenities are all components of the plan. Much of the riverwalk is in place along the Chicago River, but a lack of continuity inhibits the riverwalk from being used to its full potential. The Friends of the Chicago River's walking tour map of the downtown area highlights and interprets the historical and contemporary aspects of the river.

Natural and Cultural Resource-Based Recreation and Education: Natural river features are at a premium along the Chicago River, and future development could help or hurt what is already there. The river mouth and turning basin attract birds migrating along the lake shore, and are popular birding areas. Wolf Point has the only natural river edge in the downtown area, providing a welcome contrast in this highly urban setting. Planning documents suggest that when this privately owned parcel is developed, the natural condition should be retained to the extent practical. The real asset of the river downtown is its rich cultural history, including two sites—the cabin of Jean Baptiste Point du Sable and Fort Dearborn—that mark the founding of present-day Chicago. Although these structures are long gone, the buildings and bridges that now define the river are some of the most interesting in the city and represent a range of architectural styles. Boat tours by the Chicago Architectural Foundation interpret the history of these structures, as do guided and self-guided downtown walking tours.

Other Recreation: Just outside the locks on Lake Michigan lies historic Navy Pier, built in 1916 for ship and recreational purposes and it has been redeveloped as a premiere entertainment facility for the city. Opened in summer 1995, the completely renovated pier includes a 19-acre park to serve as the gateway to the I&M National Heritage Corridor, a 1-acre indoor winter garden/park, a 1,500-seat theatre, an exhibition hall and conference facility, an amusement park with ferris wheel and carousel, a bike path, a children's museum, stores, restaurants, and more. Inside the locks on the river proper, riverside restaurants, bars, and cafes along the Main Branch are few in number but very popular during the summer. The largest concentration of establishments is at North Pier, where three restaurants have floating docks that can be accessed by shore or boat. The riverwalk and adjacent plazas attract many downtown workers during lunch, and are popular locations to sit and watch people and boats go by. Rowing competitions sponsored by the Chicago River Aquatic Center draw thousands to the riverbanks, as have occasional visits by historic tall ships and events such as the City's annual Venetian Nights. A 9-hole par course at Illinois Center provides a unique golfing experience in the heart of downtown, but will be built upon when the full development plan for the site is implemented.

REACH 7 SOUTH BRANCH OF THE CHICAGO RIVER AND SOUTH FORK (BUBBLY CREEK)

RESOURCE CHARACTER

Location: The South Branch of the Chicago River begins where the North and Main Branch meet at Wolf Point. It flows south for 4 miles to Damen Avenue and its confluence with the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal and the now filled-in West Fork (Figure 4.4). The South Fork of the South Branch of the Chicago River, known as Bubbly Creek, flows into the South Branch at the South Turning Basin at Ashland Avenue. Once including both West and East Arms, the South Fork was gradually filled in as this important industrial area of Chicago grew, so that today only 1 mile of the South Fork remains.

Land Use/Vegetative Cover: The land use of the South Branch in downtown Chicago is much like that of the Main Branch, a canyon of high-rise office buildings with a discontinuous walkway along the river edge. South of Van Buren Street, the river is a mix of industrial and vacant land. The open space along this corridor includes hardscape plazas, grass, and formal tree plantings around the riverwalk, and pioneer brush and tree vegetation on the vacant land parcels. Areas of dense pioneer tree cover on vacant land along Bubbly Creek are fittingly called “the Amazons” by area residents. At the southern end of Bubbly Creek lies the Water Reclamation District's Racine Avenue Pumping Station and the site of the former Chicago Stockyards.

Channel Character: The river is straight and crossed by bridges nearly every block in the downtown area. Its average width is about 150 feet, and its depth is sufficient for large commercial vessels. South of downtown, the river from Polk Street to 18th Street was straightened in the 1920s in a plan to consolidate rail facilities. Below 18th Street, the river turns to the southwest, and short canals or slips along the north bank provide water access to industrial areas off the main river. The shore of the South Branch is a vertical wall of concrete or steel sheet piling for the most part, with sections of concrete riprap south of downtown. A part of the bank along the South Turning Basin has a natural slope and vegetated edge, and is the original site of the start of the historic Illinois & Michigan Canal, now known as the “Chicago Origins” site. The I&M Canal, however, is filled in at this point.

CURRENT AND POTENTIAL RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE OPPORTUNITIES

Current and potential recreation and open space opportunities in Reach 7 are described in Table 4.10 from north to south, and are keyed to Figure 4.4 with numbers in the first column of the table. Major activity types are discussed in the following sections.

Boating: Recreational boating activities centered on the Chicago River tend to spill down the South Branch in the downtown area. Motorboats launched on the lake often cruise the river down to River City and back; River City is also a common end point in the regular run for rowing shells

TABLE 4.10
Current and potential recreation-open space opportunities, Reach 7
(See Figure 4.4 for site locations)

SITE NUMBER AND NAME	MUNICIPALITY/OWNERSHIP	ACCESS, FACILITIES/NOTES
139 Chicago Riverwalk Wolf Pt.-Van Buren Street	Chicago/private	Discontiguous walkway, mostly at street level; cafes
140 River City	Chicago/private	Marina
141 CSX properties	Chicago/private	Undeveloped parcels with proposed riverwalk development
142 Chicago Riverwalk Van Buren-Cermak Road	Chicago/private	Proposed riverwalk on undeveloped/industrial land
143 Chinatown Park	Chicago/Chicago Park District	12 acre planned park development
144 Wholesale Food Market	Chicago/private	Proposed public river edge
145 Chicago Origins Park	Chicago/Illinois Department of Natural Resources	1.5 acre future park and interpretive site
146 Bubbly Creek Wetland and Union Stockyard Gate	Chicago/state and city property to be managed by the Chicago Park District	Proposed environmental and historic park
147 Job Corps site (31st & Kedzie)	Chicago/U.S. Dept. Labor	Proposed public river edge

Abbreviations: FPD—Forest Preserve District; URP—Urban Resources Partnership of Chicago; MWRD—Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago.

launched from the Chicago River Aquatic Center and for excursion boats that tour the river. An increasing number of boaters from the southern reaches of the corridor are motoring up the South Branch to see the sights downtown. Canoes and kayaks are uncommon on the South Branch, but the lower volume of commercial and recreational traffic makes Bubbly Creek an appealing alternative for some local paddlers. Several boat yards located along the South Branch provide off-season dry docking for area boaters and sailors. River City contains a small marina but offers few services to non-members. Future development of properties along the South Branch may provide new marina space and facilities, but until the real estate market improves, there are no definite plans for these properties.

Fishing: Fishing is marginal on the South Branch. Shore anglers are infrequently spotted near the South Turning Basin and along Bubbly Creek, and have reported catching bass and large carp.

Trails: The Chicago Riverwalk continues along the South Branch from the Chicago River, and is proposed by the Chicago Riverwalk Corporation to go as far south as Chinatown (Cermak Road). The northern end (Wolf Point to Van Buren Streets) is currently the most developed; here the riverwalk is a series of street-level hardscape walkways and plazas with some formal tree and flower plantings. The walkway necessarily breaks every block for a street crossing, and runs principally along the west bank of the river. On the west bank between Randolph and Washington Streets (the Morton International Building), stairs lead down to an attractive dock-level walkway and green area. Future development plans for the riverwalk in this section call for extending the current street-level walkway north and south and for constructing a cantilevered walkway at the dock level. Below Van Buren Street, the plan proposes dock-level walkways on both sides of the river, terminating near the new Chinatown Park. CSX Real Property, Inc., owns large land parcels in this section, and proposals for their development include the

riverwalk as an integral part in the plan. Development plans for the new Wholesale Food Market and the Job Corps Center also call for a public walkway and landscaping along the river edge. Other large property owners like the Chicago Union Station Company (Amtrak rail yard) and Commonwealth Edison (generating station) are less enthusiastic about the prospects of a public walkway on their property because of safety and liability concerns. This end of the riverwalk could be linked with the Forest Preserve District of Cook County's Centennial Trail to the south and the proposed Street Charles Airline rail-trail, which crosses the river north of 18th Street. A trail or walking route could also be developed along Bubbly Creek in conjunction with a proposed wetland park development (see next paragraph).

Natural and Cultural Resource-Based Recreation and Education: Proposed development of the Chicago Origins site by the Chicago Park District and other entities would offer a unique opportunity to enhance the natural environment of the South Turning Basin and interpret the natural and cultural history of the Chicago Region. The park would also provide a focal point within the City of Chicago for interpretation of the 120-mile-long I&M Canal National Heritage Corridor. This National Park Service-designated corridor encompasses much of the ChicagoRivers study area south of the South Branch. There is also a proposal to transform the former Chicago Stockyards on Bubbly Creek into a wetland park and historical site, using the highly degraded area as a laboratory and demonstration project for environmental restoration, providing a link to an important part of Chicago's past, and adding needed recreation space to an underserved area of Chicago.

Other Recreation: A few cafes along the northern section of the riverwalk offer outdoor seating, and the riverwalk as a whole is a popular area for downtown employees to eat lunch or just relax and watch the urban scene. The proposed Chinatown Park would offer a full range of active and passive activities, including facilities and amenities that reflect the culture of the Chinese American community located adjacent to the park.

REACHES 8 AND 9 CHICAGO SANITARY AND SHIP CANAL

RESOURCE CHARACTER

Location: The Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal begins at Damen Avenue and the Stevenson Expressway (Interstate 55) in Chicago, and runs for nearly 30 miles in a southwesterly direction through the City of Chicago and suburbs of Stickney, Forest View, Lyons, Summit, Bedford Park, Justice, Willow Springs, Lemont, and Romeoville (Figure 4.5) The canal terminates in Lockport, where it joins the Des Plaines River. Construction of the canal began in 1892 and was completed in 1907. The northern end of the canal joins the South Branch of the Chicago River, where a portion of the original channel of the South Branch was filled in and its flow was reversed to carry wastewater and barge traffic.

Land Use/Vegetative Cover: Nearly all of the shoreline property along the canal is owned by the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago. Much of this property is leased out for industrial uses, especially in the upper part of the reach above suburban Summit. In this stretch, the canal is also paralleled by the Stevenson Expressway (Interstate 55). Below Summit, nearby land use includes significant natural areas such as the Palos (Cook Co.) and Waterfall Glen (DuPage Co.) Forest Preserves. In some areas, residential neighborhoods occur just outside the corridor. Land not leased is usually forested along the shore, which effectively screens whatever may occur just beyond the banks. Together with dedicated natural areas, these vegetated strips of land give much of the shoreline below Summit a very natural character.

Channel Character: Although the shoreline of the lower Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal appears natural, the straightness of the channel tells users that this is a highly engineered waterway. The average width of the channel is around 300 feet, and its 24-foot depth accommodates barge and other commercial boat traffic. Bank character ranges from vertical concrete and steel sheet piling along many of the industrial properties, to steeply sloped rocky rubble or vertical cut stone walls along undeveloped sections. Below Summit, the corridor of the Sanitary and Ship Canal bends slightly southward and is paralleled by the I&M Canal and the Des Plaines River. Openings in the foliage reveal the nearness of these waterways and associated slough areas.

CURRENT AND POTENTIAL RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE OPPORTUNITIES

Current and potential recreation and open space opportunities in Reaches 8 and 9 are described in Table 4.11 from north to south, and are keyed to Figure 4.5 with numbers in the first column of the table. Major activity types are discussed in the sections below.

Boating: Barge traffic, a straight channel, and limitations on access constrain use of the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal for small paddlecraft. Wakes generated by large commercial

and recreational craft can make paddling difficult, and the vertical shoreline along much of the canal makes it difficult to get out of the water if there is a problem. The Forest Preserve District of Cook County does not provide any developed access to the canal, and if it did, that access would most likely be oriented to powerboats. However, the district has developed a 14.4-mile water trail on the adjacent Des Plaines River from its Stony Ford Preserve, just north of the Chicago Portage, to Lemont, which provides an attractive alternative for canoeists and kayakers. The water trail is part of the I&M Canal National Heritage Corridor, and the district has three launching sites along the route. Paddlers can continue down the Des Plaines to visit historic sites at Isle a la Cache and Lockport.

The Sanitary and Ship Canal has become more popular in recent years with motorboaters, and it is usually taken by boaters coming up from Lockport or from the Cal-Sag Channel (Reach 10) to visit downtown Chicago. Despite the straightness of the channel, the shore provides attractive natural scenery and has been described as a good route to view fall colors. A private marina has been proposed for development in Lemont; this would require blasting a hole through bedrock separating an abandoned, flooded quarry from the canal.

Fishing: Not much fishing has been observed on the Sanitary and Ship Canal, either by boat or from the shore. Access to the channel for shore fishing is constrained by the nature of the banks, which in the forest preserves are steep, littered with rocky rubble from construction of the canal, and dense with vegetation. The MWRD's new Sidestream Elevated Pool Aeration (SEPA) stations are becoming increasingly popular places for fishing, and one of these is located at the junction of the canal and the Cal-Sag Channel. Shore access is available, but most fishing is done from boats below the "waterfall." The lakes and sloughs of the Palos Preserves are close to the canal, and are popular fishing spots in this area of the corridor. According to fishing interests, the spring-fed Lemont quarries area has the potential to become a premiere managed recreational fishery, though most of the land is now privately owned.

Trails: Trails in and near the corridor of the Sanitary and Ship Canal are numerous, and projects in the works promise a greatly increased network. In Cook County, the forest preserve district has the I&M Canal Bicycle Trail, a 9-mile paved trail straddling the I&M and Sanitary & Ship Canals. Just to the south of this trail is the district's 13,000-acre Palos Division. Although the table above lists only those forest preserve sites in Palos that are near the canal, the division has an extensive network of developed trails for biking, hiking, and horseback riding. Palos is also a top spot in the metropolitan region for mountain biking, and trail use policies are being established. In DuPage County, the 2,470-acre Waterfall Glen Forest Preserve has an 8.5-mile gravel loop trail for biking, hiking, and horseback riding. And in Will County, most of the forest preserve land designated as Recreational Areas and Nature Preserves has hiking trails.

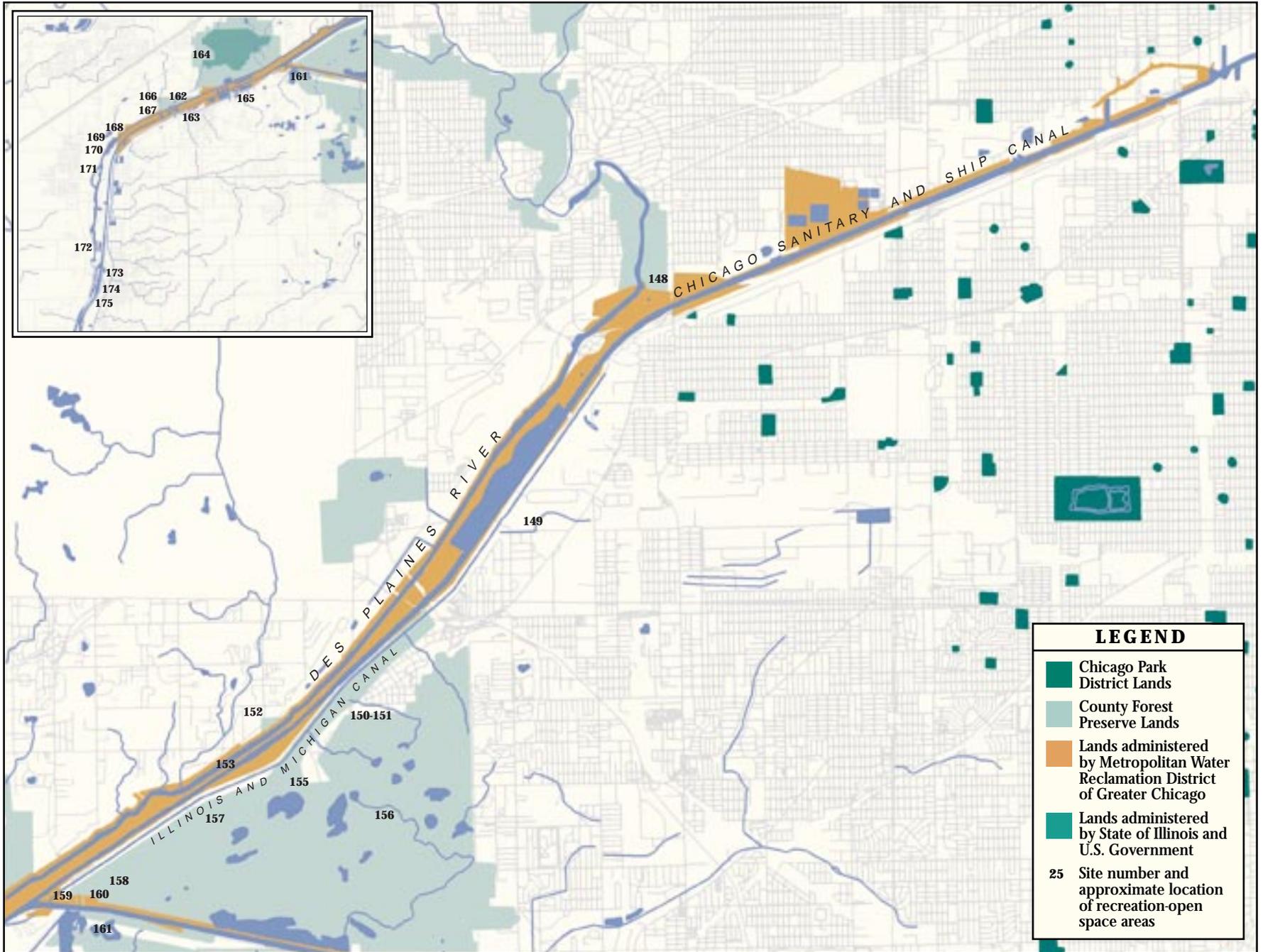


FIGURE 4.5
Current and potential recreation-open space opportunities, Reaches 8, 9B and 9B)

TABLE 4.11
Current and potential recreation-open space opportunities, Reaches 8 and 9
(See Figure 4.5 for site locations)

SITE NUMBER AND NAME	MUNICIPALITY/OWNERSHIP	ACCESS, FACILITIES/NOTES
148 Chicago Portage Woods Ottawa Trail Woods	Salt Creek Division/ Cook County FPD	300 acre, picnic areas, historic site near the canal
149 Centennial Trail	Lyons-Lockport/Cook, DuPage, and Will County FPDs	20 mile bike trail under construction
150 Willow Springs Woods ¹	Palos Division/Cook County FPD	Picnic area, foot trail
151 Willow Hills Memorial Park	Unincorporated/private	Cemetery
152 Columbia Woods ¹	Palos/Cook County FPD	Picnic area, Des Plaines River canoe launch
153 I&M Canal Bike Trail	Palos Division/Cook County FPD	9 mile paved bike trail
154 Chicago Portage Canoe Trail	Palos Division/Cook County FPD	14 mile canoe trail on the Des Plaines River
155 Paw Paw Woods ¹	Palos Division/Cook County FPD	Picnic and natural area
156 Little Red Schoolhouse	Palos Division/Cook County FPD	Nature center; nature trail
157 Henry DeTonty Woods ¹	Palos Division/Cook County FPD	Picnic area, developed trail
158 Red Gate Woods ¹	Palos Division/Cook County FPD	Picnic area, developed trail
159 Canal Junction Station	Unincorporated Cook County/MWRD	Aeration station and public park
160 St. James Sag Church	Palos Division/Cook County FPD	Historic site
161 Camp Sagawau	Palos Division/Cook County FPD	Environmental education center, natural area, x-c ski program
162 Lemont quarries	Lemont/private	Proposed fishing, marina sites
163 Lemont Bike Path	Lemont/Village of Lemont	Proposed 6 mile bike path along I&M Canal
164 Waterfall Glen	Unincorporated/DuPage County FPD	2,470 acre, 8.5 mile multi-use trail, picnic area
165 Cog Hill Golf and Country Club	Lemont/private open to public	Four 18-hole public fee golf courses
166 Wood Ridge	Unincorporated/DuPage County FPD	234 acre open land
167 Black Partridge Woods ¹	Palos Div./Cook County FPD	Picnic and natural areas
168 Keepataw	Unincorporated/Will County FPD	216 acre, hiking
169 Veterans Woods	Unincorporated/Will County FPD	77 acre picnic area, hiking
170 Romeoville Prairie	Romeoville/Will County FPD	251 acre natural area/no public access
171 Isle al a Cache	Romeoville/Will County FPD	87 acre historical/interpretive center, picnic area, hiking and canoeing on Des Plaines River
172 Lockport Prairie	Lockport/Will County FPD	254 acre natural area and nature trail
173 I&M Canal Visitor Center	Lockport/National Park Service	Historic site and information center
174 Gaylord Donnelly Canal Trail	Lockport/Lockport	Historic/interpretive trail
175 Heritage Park and Trail	Lockport/public and private	260 acre park and 2.7 mile trail from Lockport to Joliet

¹Note: The Forest Preserve District of Cook County does not break down acreage of holdings by site; approximate size of the entire Palos Division is 6,338 acres. Abbreviations: FPD—Forest Preserve District; URP—Urban Resources Partnership of Chicago; MWRD—Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago.

Currently in the works is a trail that will tie these and other trails together into a massive southern metropolitan network. Funds are in place for building much of the Centennial Trail, a 20-mile trail following MWRD land along the canal from the Chicago Portage to Lockport. The trail is being developed by forest preserve districts in Cook (11 mi.), DuPage (2.5 mi.), and Will (6.5 mi.) Counties; a 3-mile gravel stretch from the Will County line south to Isle a la Cache has been completed. The Centennial Trail would connect on the south end to the Gaylord Donnelly Canal Trail in Lockport, the planned 2.7-mile Heritage Park Trail from Lockport to Joliet, and from there to the 40-mile-long I&M Canal State Trail to La Salle-Peru, IL, the terminus of the 120-mile I&M Canal National Heritage Corridor. The Centennial Trail would also parallel and possibly connect with the Forest Preserve District of

Cook County's I&M Canal Bicycle Trail and the proposed 6-mile Lemont Bike Path, also along the I&M Canal. A proposed trail along the Cal-Sag Channel would give Centennial Trail users the option to go east through Palos to Lake Michigan and south to Cook County forest preserve trails on Tinley Creek and Thorn Creek. On the north end, the trail could eventually connect with existing and proposed trails along Salt Creek and the Des Plaines River, and follow the canal north into the city to connect with the Chicago Riverwalk. The Centennial Trail is an outgrowth of the MWRD's Riveredge Renaissance public access policy.

Natural and Cultural Resource-Based Recreation and Education: The Sanitary and Ship Canal is rich in natural and cultural history. The Palos and Waterfall Glen Forest

Preserves are key natural areas for the Chicago metropolitan region, and are popular for birding, wildlife observation, and nature exploration. The preserves are also the sites of significant ecological restoration programs, which rely on volunteers for much of the work that is being accomplished. The canal itself is a good place to birdwatch, and many shorebirds and waterfowl can be observed there. The Forest Preserve District of Cook County has two environmental education facilities in Palos: The Little Red Shoolhouse Nature Center, which has indoor displays, outdoor demonstration areas, and a nature trail; and Camp Sagawau, an educational facility that has special scheduled programs and workshops, an education field camp, and the unique Sagawau Canyon Nature Preserve. Further south, Lockport and Romeoville Prairies are two of the best examples of native tallgrass prairies in the metropolitan area; both sites are designated Illinois Nature Preserves. The canal corridor itself has a rich cultural history, and the I&M Canal National Heritage Corridor has some of its most significant cultural sites in this reach. Historic sites include St. James of the Sag Church and Cemetery in the canal town of Lemont; the Isle a la Cache living history museum in Romeoville; and the town of Lockport, which has more than 37 historic sites and structures, and is considered one of the best preserved canal towns in the U.S. A museum, visitor center, and historic trail are three key interpretive sites that make Lockport an important terminus of the Chicago River corridor. At the northern end of the canal, the Forest Preserve District of Cook County has proposed building a Chicago Portage Interpretive Facility and Visitor Center, to inform people of the historic portage between the Chicago River (Great Lakes) and Des Plaines River (Mississippi) watersheds made famous by Marquette and Joliet in 1673, as well as to interpret the diverse natural and cultural history of the region.

Other Recreation: Many of the forest preserve sites near the canal offer picnicking and a range of passive and active recreational activities. In addition to educational sites, many of the canal towns in the lower part of the reach have antique stores, bed and breakfasts, and other attractions geared to tourism. Unlike the northern reaches of the study area, few golf courses are on or directly adjacent to the canal. However, several private country clubs and public courses are nearby, including the giant Cog Hill Golf and Country Club near Lemont, which has four 18-hole golf courses and is home of the Western Open Professional Golfers' Association (PGA) Tour.

REACH 10 CALUMET RIVER, LITTLE CALUMET RIVER, AND CALUMET-SAG CHANNEL

RESOURCE CHARACTER

Location: Reach 10 begins at Calumet Harbor on Lake Michigan. Here, the reversed Calumet River runs south through Chicago's southeast side neighborhoods until it meets the Grand Calumet River in suburban Burnham. The channel, from this point called the Little Calumet River, takes

a turn to the east, flowing through Calumet City, Dolton, Chicago, Riverdale, and Calumet Park. At Calumet Park, this reversed channel meets the original flow of the Little Calumet River coming in from the south. From here west, the waterway is called the Calumet-Sag Channel. This channel flows west through Blue Island, Robbins, Alsip, Crestwood, Palos Heights, Worth, Palos Park, Palos Hills, and the Palos-Sag Valley Divisions of the Forest Preserve District of Cook County. The channel terminates at its confluence with the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal. The total length of Reach 10 is 30 miles (Figures 4.6 and 4.7).

Land Use/Vegetative Cover: The eastern end of Reach 10 is perhaps the most industrial part of the entire Chicago River corridor. Rail and ship yards transfer raw materials to factories, mills, and power stations; the region's residents and nearby mills dump their waste and slag in numerous landfills; and major highways weave through as they make their way around the southern end of Lake Michigan. In the midst of this engineered landscape lie some of the largest and most diverse wetland areas in the region. Although not technically part of the study area, the wetlands of the Lake Calumet and Wolf Lake area provide a critical context surrounding the corridor of this reach, and the corridor in turn provides an important linkage between these sites, forest preserves to the west, and Lake Michigan to the east. West of the junction with the Grand Calumet, the Little Calumet becomes less industrial, and forest preserves and marinas line the shore. This part of the reach is also one of the few areas in the entire Chicago River corridor where single family residences line the shore. The final 6 miles of the Calumet-Sag Channel flow through the Palos Forest Preserve, where the shores are wooded and appear undisturbed. The Metropolitan Water Reclamation District owns most of the land along the Calumet-Sag Channel: more than 1,200 acres on 16 miles of water frontage, 258 acres of which are leased.

Channel Character: The different waterways that make up this reach have very different characters. The Calumet River is wide (avg. 450 feet), deep (27 feet), and has several slips and turning basins along its shore to accommodate ship and barge docking and maneuvering. Although the river has some bends, the channel looks anything but natural. The O'Brien Locks are located on the Calumet River just above its junction with the Grand Calumet. Below this point, the river maintains its width, but the bank vegetation gives the channel a more natural character. The shore along the Little Calumet is part natural bank, part rocky riprap, and part vertical concrete or steel sheet piling. Where the banks are not fully developed, the land slopes down to the river. The original channel of the Little Calumet is much more narrow and natural looking, and not navigable by commercial boats. The Calumet-Sag Channel is relatively straight except for a few broad bends, and the width of the channel is around 300 feet. The banks of the channel vary like the Little Calumet, except on the western end, where tall cut stone walls give the waterway a very distinctive look.

CURRENT AND POTENTIAL RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE OPPORTUNITIES

Current and potential recreation and open space opportunities in Reach 10 are described in Table 4.12 from east to west, and are keyed to Figures 4.6 and 4.7 with numbers in the first column of the table. More than a half dozen large landfills in the Lake Calumet area are not included in this description, though some may hold potential as future recreation areas. Together, these landfills account for more than 1,000 acres in "open space." One former landfill that is included in the table is the 428-acre old municipal dump at the northern end of Lake Calumet, which recently opened as the Harborside International Golf Course.

Boating: Barge and ship traffic on this reach poses safety problems for canoes and paddlers. The Calumet River section of the reach is very industrial, and land use and commercial traffic could interfere with recreational and aesthetic enjoyment for paddlers. The original channel of the Little Calumet is not used commercially, and its more natural channel and banks would give this tributary the highest potential in the reach for recreational paddling. The Calumet-Sag Channel through Palos Preserves is narrow (around 300 feet), and the vertical stone walls along the shore create a "bathtub effect," echoing wakes from large craft.

In contrast, recreational motorboating is much more feasible in the reach, and the profusion of marinas in the eastern half of the corridor are an indicator of the recreational boat traffic there. Proposals and signs posted along the shore promise development of additional marinas. A few public boat launches are also along the reach, including the Beaubien Forest Preserve Boating Center, the Calumet Forest Preserve Boating Center, and the Village of Alsip Marina. Although most of these centers serve lakebound boaters, improvements in water quality in the waterways are attracting more boaters to head west, down the Calumet-Sag Channel and Sanitary and Ship Canal to Lockport or north to downtown Chicago. One increasingly popular activity for boaters from these marinas is to do "the triangle," taking the Calumet-Sag west to the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal, the canal and South Branch north to Wolf Point, the Chicago River to Lake Michigan, then down the lakeshore and back to the marina. The average boater takes 6-7 hours. These trips are popular in the summer to see the sights downtown, and in the fall to see the fall colors along the waterways.

As in the downtown area but to a much lesser extent, excursion boats in this reach offer tours of the canal and lake.

Finally, commercial traffic in this reach has a recreational component, offering viewers from land a look at the current activity of a working river and a window to this region's historical importance as a hub of water-dependent commerce.

Fishing: With increases in water quality, recreational fishing on the reach is becoming more popular, but remains uncommon. Some recreational boaters fish the eastern end of the reach on their way out to Lake Michigan. Other boaters and bank anglers fish the original channel of the Little Calumet; one popular bank fishing area is at the Calumet Forest

Preserve Boating Center. On the main channel of the Little Calumet, the Beaubien Forest Preserve Boating Center has a concrete dock along the river that is also used for fishing. Other informal sites along the Little Calumet and Calumet-Sag are also used for bank fishing, and as mentioned previously, the MWRD's new SEPA Stations are becoming popular for boat and shore fishing. Commonly caught species include carp, bullhead, and bluegill. Seasonal runs of salmon and trout also occur in the Cal-Sag.

Although fishing in the channel proper is currently marginal, the major lakes and sloughs in the Palos Forest Preserves such as Saganashkee Slough are heavily fished. Restoration of Flatfoot Lake in the Beaubien Forest Preserve includes improvements for recreational fishing. The restoration program is one of the ChicagoRivers demonstration projects now being conducted with funding from the Urban Resources Partnership (URP). Partners include the Forest Preserve District of Cook County, The Nature Conservancy, and Fishin' Buddies. There is also talk of opening Lake Katherine to fishing on a limited basis, to control the game-fish population and provide more bluegills for heron feeding.

Trails: The extensive system of developed trails throughout the Palos Preserves provide the bulk of existing hiking, bicycling, and equestrian opportunities along this reach. Spoil stone left from construction of the canal provides a challenging trail along the banks of the Calumet-Sag Channel, and is used by mountain bikers, as well as illegally by motorcycles and 4-wheel all-terrain vehicles. Nature trails run throughout the Lake Katherine Nature Center in Palos Heights.

In terms of future opportunities, the entire reach from the junction of the Grand Calumet to the junction of the Sanitary and Ship Canal has been proposed as a trail corridor. Along one small section of this reach in the Palos Preserves, the Forest Preserve District of Cook County is currently working with a private contractor to remove the rock spoil deposited along the bank during the original construction of the canal. The value of the stone will offset its removal costs and the grading of the bank for use as a bicycle trail. If successful, the process will be used to develop a trail along the Calumet-Sag Channel from the junction of the Sanitary and Ship Canal west to the Lake Katherine Nature Center just east of Harlem Avenue (IL 43). At this point, the trail would connect with an existing trail that follows a Commonwealth Edison powerline right-of-way south to the Tinley Creek Forest Preserve, where the Forest Preserve District of Cook County has another 13 miles of bicycle trail. From Lake Katherine east, there is a conceptual plan for a Calumet Area Prairie Greenway that would tie the Palos Preserves with the lakefront, along with other forest preserve district sites and the State's William Powers Conservation Area. Near the Whistler Woods Forest Preserve, the abandoned Conrail right-of-way is slated for rail-trail conversion, and will link the waterway with a 6.5-mile trail to the Dan Ryan Woods Forest Preserve; this would eventually tie north into the city's historic boulevard system. Finally, on the east end of the reach, there are proposals for developing at least part of the closed USX South Works Steel

TABLE 4.12
Current and potential recreation-open space opportunities, Reach 10
(See Figures 4.6 and 4.7 for site locations)

SITE NUMBER AND NAME	MUNICIPALITY/OWNERSHIP	ACCESS, FACILITIES/NOTES
176 USX site/Iroquois Landing	Chicago/private	Potential park site
177 Eggers Woods, including Eggers Grove and Wolf Lake Overlook	Chicago/FPDCC & private	250 acre picnic area, model airplane flying area, marsh
178 Wolf Lake/William Powers Conservation Area	Chicago/IL Dept. of Conservation	613 acre nature, fishing, recreational area
179 Burnham Woods, Powderhorn Lake, and Burnham Woods Golf Course	Chicago-Burnham/FPDCC	175 acre nature preserve, fishing lake, golf course
180 Hyde Lake & Wetlands	Chicago/private	40 acre proposed natural area
181 Turning Basin Wetland	Chicago/private	Proposed natural area
182 Torrence Avenue Station	Chicago/MWRD	Aeration station and public park
183 Indian Ridge Marsh	Chicago/private	165 acre proposed natural area
184 Heron Pond	Chicago/MWRD & private	50 acre proposed natural area
185 Deadstick Pond	Chicago/MWRD	80 acre proposed natural area
186 Lake Calumet	Chicago/Illinois International Port District	540 acre proposed natural and recreational area
187 Big Marsh	Chicago/Waste Management	290 acre proposed natural area
188 Railroad Prairie	Chicago/Norfolk and Western	190 acre natural area
189 Harborside International Golf Course	Chicago/Illinois International Port District	428 acre 36-hole golf course and driving range
190 Lake Calumet Beach	Chicago/Illinois International Port District	120 acre proposed natural area
191 Hegewisch Marsh	Chicago/Waste Management	140 acre proposed natural area
192 O'Brien Lock Marsh and Whitford Pond	Chicago/MWRD	120 acre proposed natural area
193 Windjammer Marina	Chicago/private	Marina
194 Sunset Harbor Marina	Chicago/private	Marina
195 Riverside Marina	Chicago/private	Marina
196 Pier 11 Marina	Chicago/private	Marina
197 Riley's Marina	Burnham/private	Marina
198 Beaubien Woods, Flatfoot Lake, and Beaubien Boating Center	Chicago/Cook County FPD	289 acre, boat access to river, picnic area, fishing lake is URP/ Chicago Rivers demonstration project
199 Altgeld Gardens Marsh	Chicago/MWRD	16 acre wetland
200 Lake Calumet Boat & Gun Club	Chicago/private	Marina
201 Maryland Boat Club	Chicago/private	Marina
202 Skipper's Marina	Chicago/private	Marina
203 Rentner Marine	Chicago/private	Marina
204 Dolton Yacht Club	Dolton/private	Marina
205 127th Street Station	Chicago/MWRD	Aeration station and public park
206 Whistler Woods Forest Preserve ¹	Chicago/Cook County FPD	Picnic area
207 Pipe O'Peace Golf Range ¹	Chicago/Cook County FPD	Golf driving range
208 Joe Louis Golf Course ¹	Chicago/Cook County FPD	Golf course
209 Calumet Boating Center ¹	Chicago/Cook County FPD	Boat access to river
210 Calumet Woods ¹	Chicago/Cook County FPD	Picnic area on Little Calumet
211 Kickapoo Woods ¹	Chicago/Cook County FPD	3 picnic groves on Little Calumet, model airplane flying area
212 Blue Island Station	Blue Island/MWRD	Aeration station and public park
213 Alsip Boat Landing	Alsip/Village of Alsip	Boat launch and park
214 Worth Station	Worth/MWRD	Aeration station and public park
215 Lake Katherine Nature Center	Palos Heights/Palos Heights Park District	113.1 acre site includes a 20 acre lake, nature center, and trails
216 Paddock Woods ¹	Sag Valley Division/Cook County FPD	Parking, trail
217 Palos Park Woods ¹	Sag Valley Division/Cook County FPD	Picnic areas, trail
218 Swallow Cliff Woods	Sag Valley Division/Cook County FPD	800 acre ecological restoration site
219 Saganashkee Slough ¹	Palos Division/Cook County FPD	Natural area, fishing
220 Teasons Woods ¹	Sag Valley Division/Cook County FPD	Picnic area, trail
221 Cap Sauers Holdings ¹	Sag Valley Division/Cook County FPD	Natural area, trail
222 Sag Quarries ¹	Sag Valley Division/Cook County FPD	Fishing

¹ Note: The Forest Preserve District of Cook County does not break down acreage of holdings by site; approximate total area of sites 206-211 is 900 acres; the entire Sag Valley Division, encompassing sites 216-218 and 220-222 is 7,629 acres; the entire Palos Division, encompassing site 219 is 6,338 acres.
Abbreviations: FPD—Forest Preserve District; URP—Urban Resources Partnership of Chicago; MWRD—Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago.

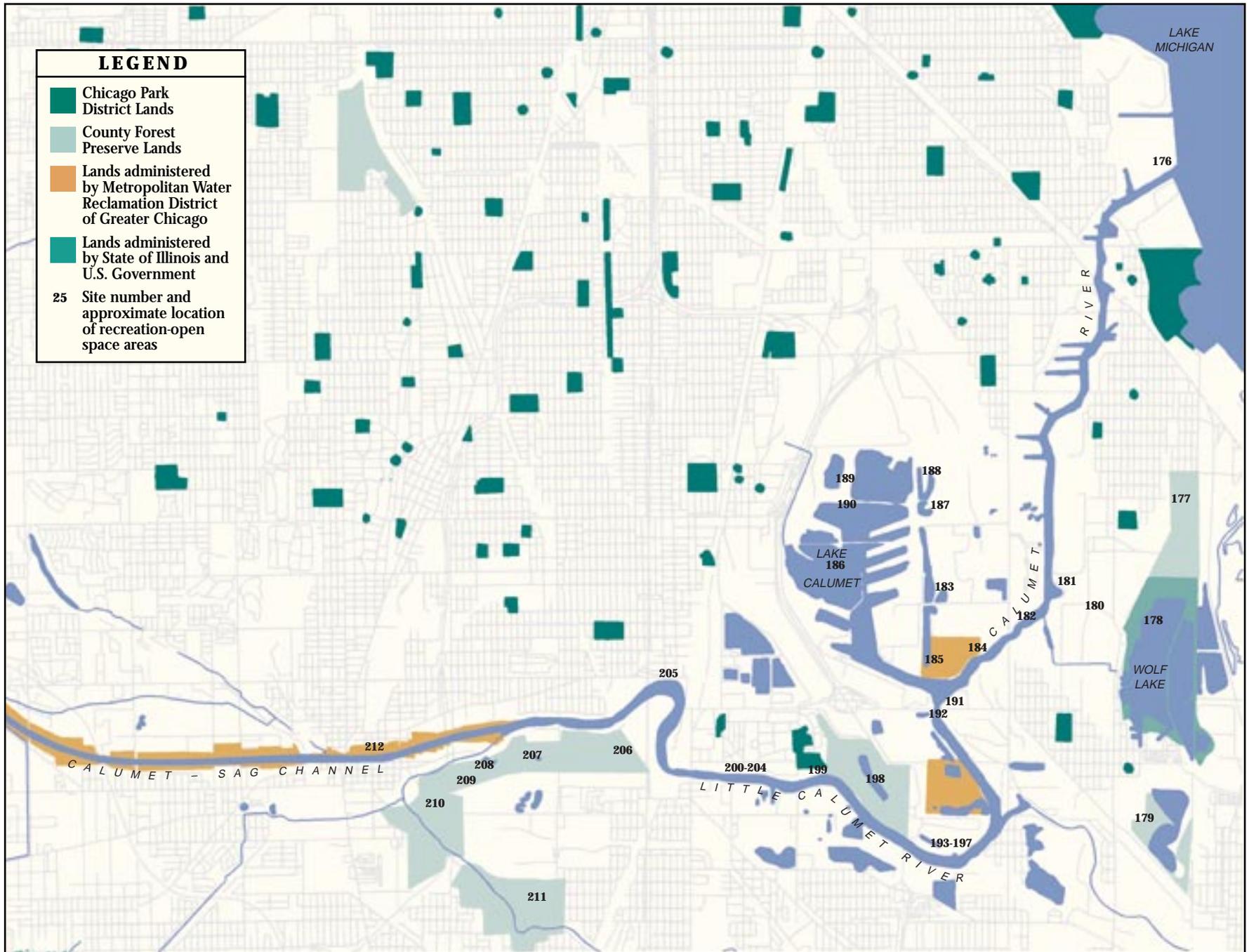


FIGURE 4.6
Current and potential recreation-open space opportunities, Reaches 10B and 10C

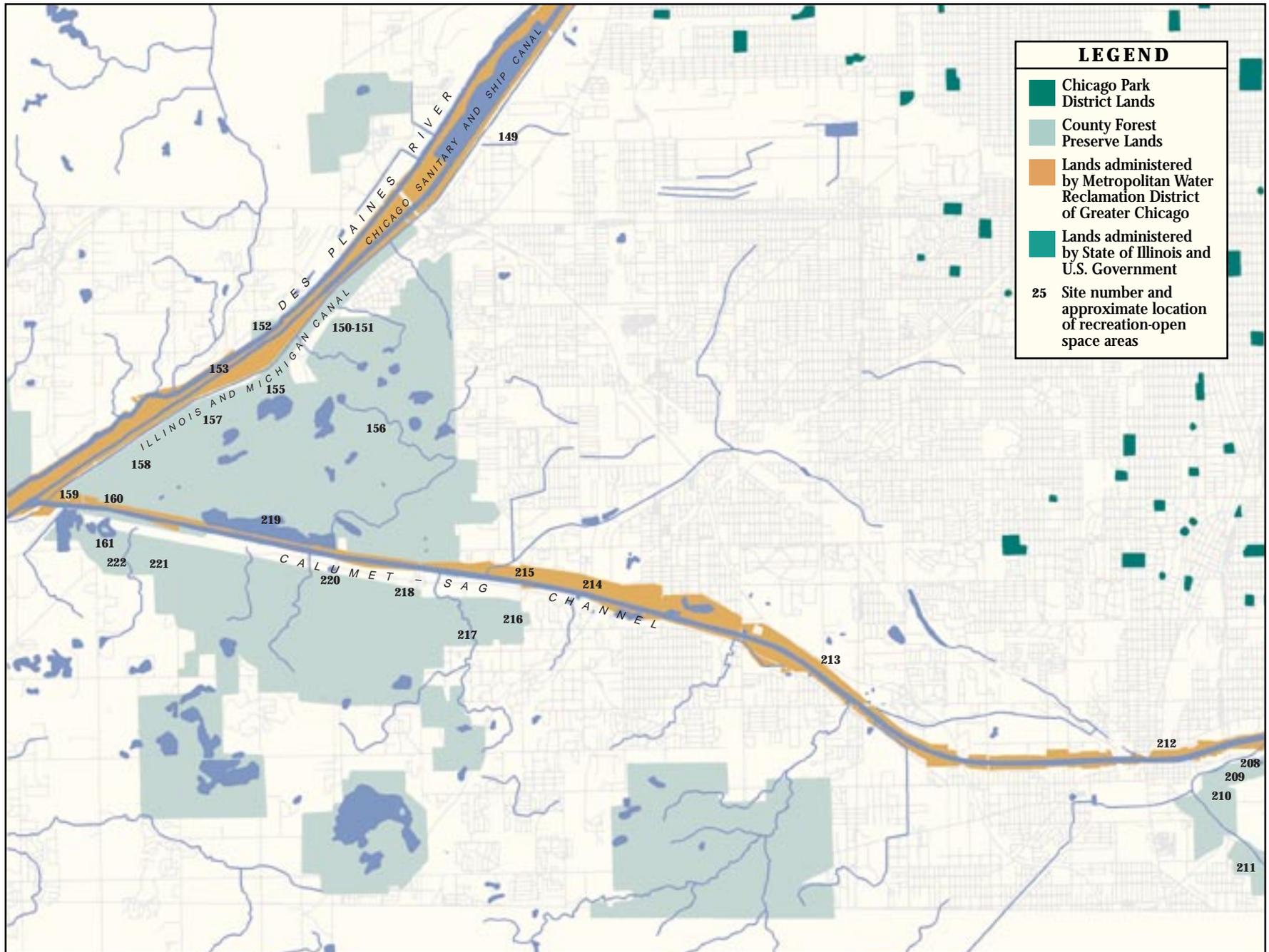


FIGURE 4.7
Current and potential recreation-open space opportunities, Reach 10A

Mill and Iroquois Landing at Calumet Harbor as a public park. This could provide an eventual tie to the existing 20-mile Chicago Lakefront Path to the north and to proposed trails linking Cook County forest preserves to the south.

Natural and Cultural Resource-Based Recreation and Education: The Lake Calumet area holds some of the greatest opportunities for increasing nature recreation and education in the corridor. The many marshes in the area provide good habitat for birds and other wildlife, and are frequented by birders, especially during spring and fall migrations. The Calumet Ecological Park Association, Audubon, and other local environmental groups host regular outings to the Lake Calumet area.

Many nature recreation and education opportunities in the Palos Preserves have already been mentioned in the description for Reaches 8 and 9. It should be stressed that the marshes and sloughs alongside the Cal-Sag Channel in Palos are some of the most important in the metropolitan area. Boaters on the Calumet-Sag can observe birds and other wildlife, especially near the Saganashkee Slough. In 1994, the Forest Preserve District of Cook County, The Nature Conservancy, and other public and private organizations began a major ecological restoration demonstration project at the 800-acre Swallow Cliff Woods Forest Preserve just south of the Calumet-Sag Channel. This project is being used as a model for ecosystem management of some 68,000 acres of district lands, and has received national attention. In addition to Camp Sagawau and Little Red Schoolhouse Nature Centers, the Forest Preserve District of Cook County also operates the Sand Ridge Nature Center just south of the corridor in the suburb of South Holland. The Lake Katherine Nature Center is well used by residents and school groups from the Palos area. The center hosts seasonal nature appreciation festivals, school tours, and other programs, and has more than 100 volunteers who, among other things, engage in tree planting, prairie restoration, and bird habitat improvement.

Finally, the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District's five SEPA Stations located along the reach offer opportunities for visitors to learn about water quality improvement. The design of the Torrence Avenue Station incorporates a 6-acre heron rookery into the site.

Other Recreation: Forest Preserve District of Cook County sites near this reach offer picnicking and a range of passive and active recreational activities, including the Joe Louis "The Champ" Golf Course and the Pipe-O-Peace Driving Range. The new Harborside International Golf Course on the north end of Lake Calumet exemplifies the potential for reclaiming old industrial sites in the Chicago River corridor for recreation. Completed in 1997, this hilly, treeless, former municipal landfill provides 36 of the most unique and challenging holes in the country. Several other golf courses and country clubs are located near the corridor, although none are directly on the waterway. The Water Reclamation District's five SEPA facilities each have public parks associated with them, designed mainly for passive use.

PART IV ISSUES RELATED TO KEY RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

RECREATIONAL BOATING

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In its key location as a bridge between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River drainage basins, Chicago has long had important ties to waterways. American Indians used the Chicago Portage as a major trading route for many generations, and in the years following its 1673 exploration by Marquette and Jolliet, the route became central to the development of the western frontier. The building of the Illinois & Michigan Canal, development of the Chicago and Calumet River Harbors, and subsequent additions and improvements to waterways in the Chicago River corridor secured Chicago's place as the link between markets in the east and resources to the north and west.

With water a focus of the city's livelihood, it is no wonder that many Chicagoans also look to water as a recreational resource. As early as the 1850s, boating became a way for the city's elite to enjoy Lake Michigan. Yacht and canoe clubs were popular along the lakeshore by the turn of the century, and a rowing club used their shells on Lake Calumet as early as the 1880s. For the working class, recreational boating during this time was confined primarily to excursion boats on Lake Michigan and to canoe and rowboat rentals on ponds in the city's larger parks. Beginning in the 1920s and increasing after World War II, private boats came within financial reach of a larger group of people. Marinas sprung up along the Calumet River, and motorboats and sailboats used the protected cover of the river for mooring and the lake for leisure. The North and South Branches also became the sites for several boat yards, where boat owners who moored at lake marinas docked their boats for winter storage. Further north on the Skokie River, the massive public works project in the 1930s that developed the Skokie Lagoons also expanded boating opportunities, and the Forest Preserve District of Cook County established a canoe livery for rentals. Thus, with a few exceptions, recreational boating in Chicago focused on Lake Michigan and area lakes and ponds. Like the industry surrounding it, the Chicago River waterways served the utilitarian needs of recreational boaters.

The 1950s and '60s saw the first real birth of interest in the use of area rivers for recreation. As a scout leader in the early '50s, Ralph Frese began building canvas canoes to introduce his troop to nature exploration. Interest grew among area scouts, and when fiberglass became commercially accessible, Frese's Chicagoland Canoe Base began selling canoes and canoe kits. His annual sponsored trips introduced scout leaders to area rivers, including the North Branch, which in turn became nearby destinations for troop outings. Area canoeists were attracted to the Des Plaines River, leading to the estab-

ishment of an annual canoe marathon there, which today draws more than a thousand participants.

Around this same time, the Chicago River downtown was beginning to draw interest as a recreational resource. Riccardo's restaurant sponsored a regatta on the river for small "penguin" sailboats after the larger sailboats had been brought in off the lake in the fall. When Marina City was being planned during the mid-'60s, architect Bertrand Goldberg was one of the first developers to address the river as a recreational amenity. Although it never came to fruition, Goldberg's original plan for the marina in his "city within a city" was for each resident to have space to store a small rowboat or motorboat in the marina. Drawings for the marina show 400 15-foot boats hanging up on racks for ready access. Today, the marina serves mostly large motorboats and has 12 slips in the water and dry storage where another 50-60 boats are kept and craned in.

CURRENT USE

So recreational boating in Chicago is not a new endeavor, but an outgrowth of activity that has taken place for more than a century. Such activity, which more and more includes the Chicago River, shows what clean water can bring to an urban waterway. Many of the groups, agencies, and commercial interests we interviewed for this study have helped realize this potential by increasing public awareness and interest in the river, which in turn have led to increased recreational use of the corridor. For boating, this use covers the full range of activities and their locations. This section summarizes current use information from the interviews about four main boating activities: canoeing and kayaking, rowing, motorboating, and excursion boating.

Canoeing and kayaking: Although canoeing and kayaking have increased on the Chicago River corridor in recent years, seeing a paddler on the water is still a novel event in most places. Most of the people interviewed in our study could not estimate how many people use the corridor for canoeing and kayaking, but they agreed it is low. And although the experts interviewed knew little about who was using the river outside of organized trips, those who had led outings said their attendees were a diverse mix of first time and repeat users who came both from communities near the river and from the metropolitan region at large (see Chapter 8 for more information).

The standard, two-person canoe is the most common boat in this category used in the Chicago River corridor. Smaller and lighter solo canoes and kayaks that allow greater access to shallow reaches of the corridor are used by some enthusiasts. Large voyageur canoes are occasionally used on the deeper reaches; special events and trips by the Illinois Voyageurs Brigade make up the bulk of these excursions.

Each reach of the Chicago River corridor is navigable by canoe or kayak at least in part. The most popular areas are the Skokie Lagoons (Reach 3) and the North Branch and tributary forks from below the Skokie Lagoons at Willow Road south to Lawrence Avenue in Chicago (Reaches 3, 2A, and

5a). The North Shore Channel (Reach 4) and the original channel of the Little Calumet (a tributary of Reach 10) were also cited by our experts as having good potential as canoe routes. The West Fork (Reach 1) and Middle Fork (Reach 2) are navigable in their lower sections during periods of adequate water and might also be good routes. The North Branch between Lawrence Avenue and downtown (Reach 5b), the Main Branch (Reach 6), and the South Branch including Bubbly Creek (Reach 7) have various access, land use, and competing use problems that currently make them less desirable for popular use. These problems are heightened on the Sanitary and Ship Canal (Reaches 8 and 9) and on the Calumet River, Little Calumet, and Cal-Sag Channels (Reach 10), making these reaches the least desirable for canoeing and kayaking.

The flat water that characterizes most reaches in this corridor enables canoeists and kayakers to easily paddle upstream as well as downstream. This increases the accessibility of the resource by expanding the number of put-in/take-out and trip length options, reducing the need for car-boat shuttling, and making the activity more appealing to those without extensive whitewater experience. In some cases, canoe clubs and unaffiliated paddlers use the Chicago River corridor to gain experience close to home before venturing out to more distant and challenging waters.

Rowing: Rowing has a small but dedicated following in the Chicago area, and the Chicago River has become an important location for rowing enthusiasts. Although single-person shells are often owned by individuals, the bigger 4- and 8-person shells often belong to clubs or teams. Rowers tend to use the river regularly for pleasure, exercise, or training for competition. These reasons, along with the difficulty in transporting the long shells (up to 65 feet in length), require that rowers have a central river location for boat storage and use. The Chicago River Aquatic Center has become the focus for rowing activity on the Chicago River, operating out of the old Coast Guard Station near the mouth of the river downtown. The center offers members lessons, access to equipment, and storage for private boats. The size of the facility, which is shared with the Northwestern University Rowing Team, limits membership to around 50, and there is currently a long waiting list to join.

The downtown area is the site for most of the rowing activity in the Chicago River corridor. Beginning from the Aquatic Center, rowers most often go down the Main Branch to Wolf Point, then turn south down the South Branch to River City and back. An alternate route is up the North Branch, but this direction is less favored because there is more debris in the water. Rowers use the river in the early morning to take advantage of the calm water and lack of competition by other boats. The Main Branch has also been the site of the Chicago River Regatta, an annual competition that draws collegiate rowing teams from all over to compete for Midwest, U.S., British, and International championship titles.

The North Shore Channel is occasionally used as a route for rowers, and has potential for greater use because of its

straight, sheltered channel and light use by commercial and power boats. The Chicago River Aquatic Center holds a unique annual regatta that begins on the North Shore Channel in Evanston and ends in downtown Chicago. “The Iron Oars Marathon,” billed as the “world’s longest smooth-water sculling race,” draws competitors from around the country and Canada to row the 15-mile course. At the time we were doing the interviews for this report, the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District was working with Northwestern University and another school rowing team to identify a place for storing and using shells on the channel.

Use of the other reaches in the study area for rowing is constrained by their physical nature (too sinuous, too shallow), location, or competing uses. Reaches 8, 9, and 10, however, may have potential for special events, such as marathon competitions, that could be scheduled to minimize conflicts with competing uses.

Motorboating: Privately owned motorboats make up the largest proportion of recreational water craft in the Chicago River corridor. Craft used on the rivers range from “jet skis to fifty footers,” but medium to large boats capable of running on Lake Michigan are most often seen. Smaller, faster runabouts suited more to inland lake and river use are becoming more common, and their operators tend to be younger and more sports oriented. Small fishing boats are rarely seen, but might be used in some sections, such as along the original channel of the Little Calumet River. Boats and canoes with electric trolling motors are allowed on Skokie Lagoons.

Motorboat use is centered near the locks on the Chicago and Calumet Rivers, because Lake Michigan remains the dominant focus of most boaters’ outings. There are no data on motorboat use levels, though recreational providers and marine police report that the turning basin near the locks downtown is often crowded with boats on a good summer weekend, and boaters must often wait one or more cycles to go through the locks. The Ogden Slip at North Pier can get similarly crowded, and 60-70 boats are often “rafted” together for docking as their owners visit shoreside restaurants. Similar use levels have been reported on the Calumet River; marina owners see “several hundred” boats go by their docks on a good weekend, and locks can get so filled with commercial barges and recreational boats that recreationists have to wait a cycle to go through.

Beyond the lock areas use drops dramatically, although river use has increased noticeably in recent years. Clean water, knowledge of opportunities, better access, and more things to see and do were four important reasons interviewees gave for increased motorboating on the river proper. Reaches 4, 5b, and 6-10 are all navigable by motorboat. River trips originate from four major locations, each offering several options for recreational boating:

- **Marinas on the lake and river downtown:** Perhaps one of the most popular boating activities in the entire Chicago River corridor is to “cruise the river downtown.” This area is roughly bounded by the locks on the east, River City on the south, and Chicago Avenue on the north.

Many boaters anchor in the Inner Harbor near the locks, content to watch the spectacular urban scene unfold. Few boaters venture up the North Branch due to its industrial complexion, but those who explore the river beyond Irving Park Rd., including the North Shore Channel, are often surprised by the corridor’s natural character. A few of those we interviewed mentioned the potential of this route for increased boating; one called it “a beautiful trip and one of the best kept secrets in Chicago.”

- **Marinas and boat landings along the Calumet River:** There are a dozen or so marinas and boat landings along the Calumet River west of the O’Brien Locks, and most are oriented to lakebound travelers. Marina owners, however, report that more and more boaters are using the river as a destination. Popular trips are down the Cal-Sag and the Sanitary and Ship Canal to Lockport or up to downtown Chicago. An increasingly popular extension of this latter trip is to take the lakeshore back down to the marina, a trip boaters call “doing the triangle” (see the by-reach section under Reach 10 for a fuller description of this trip).
- **Marinas and landings south of Lockport:** The Upper Illinois River corridor has many boat launching areas that can be used to access reaches of the Chicago River system. Boats coming from Lockport and areas south head up the Sanitary and Ship Canal to downtown Chicago and back or up the Cal-Sag to the lake.
- **The Alsip marina along the Calumet-Sag:** This last area is small but significant in that it lies well inland in the Chicago River corridor. Plans for additional marinas in Crestwood and the Palos area reflect the rising popularity of boating in the corridor and would increase the status of the Calumet-Sag as a place for recreational boating.

In addition to these major areas, private docks along the North Branch and Calumet-Little Calumet Rivers provide access for a few homeowners and restaurant/bar establishments, and some boat yards on the North and South Branches may also offer launching opportunities.

Excursion boating: The last major category of recreational boating includes the fewest boats, but provides more river recreation engagements than all other types combined. About 50 excursion boats are listed in the Yellow Pages; most originate in the downtown area, although one person we interviewed mentioned that at least one tour boat company runs its operation on the Calumet River. Most excursion boats, such as dinner cruise ships and fishing charters, operate strictly on the lake, but more and more often tours are including the river in their routes. About a dozen regularly scheduled tour and charter boats operate at least in part on the river. Most regularly scheduled tour boats have a guide who notes points of interests to passengers, and some regular and special tours, such as those by the Chicago Architectural Foundation and Friends of the Chicago River, focus on topics of special interest such as architecture, history, and the environment. Regular excursions appeal to a variety of people, from local residents to tourists, while chartered tours range from weddings to conventions to a “haunted” cruise of the

river on Halloween night. No data were available on annual passenger levels, but considering the size of most boats (capacity around 200), frequency of scheduled tours (up to 20 per day for Wendella), and season length (Memorial Day-Labor Day, with some going from March through New Year's Day), use probably exceeds several hundred thousand people per year.

A typical excursion boat begins on the Main Branch, heads through the locks to the lake, south down the shore to Northerly Island (Meigs Field) and back, then down the Main and South Branches to River City and back. Special tours go almost anywhere that is navigable, including day-long tours that reveal some of the most natural and the most industrial areas in metropolitan Chicago.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS TO USE

Water Quality:

Of the major issues we discussed during our interviews, water quality seemed to pose the fewest constraints to use of the river corridor for boating. Topics related to water quality included:

- **Effect of improvement on use:** Those we interviewed were nearly unanimous in their feelings that water quality had improved significantly in recent years. This improvement was seen throughout the corridor, and those familiar with boating said this has translated into increased use. Although some boaters are still apprehensive about certain stretches, events like the following one at the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District's Centennial Fountain on the Main Branch would have been unheard of 10 years ago:

The boat people that all stand around in the moor waiting for the [water] cannon to go off, to go through the water spray, well then that's its own teaching value. You used to think your kid would die if he fell in the water (David Bielenberg—Metropolitan Water Reclamation District).

Although most of the improvements in water quality were attributed to the efforts of the MWRD, river monitoring programs by the Cook County Clean Streams Committee and the RiverWatch Program of the Friends of the Chicago River were also noted for benefiting boating interests.

- **Acceptable levels of water quality:** As reported in other chapters, many attributes of water quality affect people's perception and use. Odor, clarity, the quality of the fishery, and other indicators seem to be at levels acceptable for river use by many who currently do boat the corridor, although contaminants may make some cautious about direct body contact. As one paddling booster maintains, high-quality water may not be necessary for a high-quality boating experience:

People often come to me and ask, "Gee, where can I go so the kids can paddle some clean water?" Well, there's clean water; some of the rivers in Illinois are fairly clean, there's a great fish population out near Decatur on the Little Wisconsin, and so on. But I ask them, "Why bother? You're going to be paddling it, not drinking it." I point out to them, the thing that makes a river trip or an activity like this of interest is not the quality of the water, it's what you discover on the banks. That's far more important (Ralph Frese, Chicagoland Canoe Base, Inc.).

- **In-stream debris:** One water quality problem that does affect use for some boaters is floating debris. Several people we interviewed mentioned that boaters have complained about hitting floating logs and other debris on their excursions. For slow-moving canoeists, debris in the upper North Branch and Little Calumet River can be annoying but seldom dangerous. For faster moving rowers and power boaters, however, debris can damage boats and props. According to several people we interviewed, the Water Reclamation District's "skimmer boats" have done an excellent job in keeping the Main Branch of the Chicago River free from debris. The quantity of debris coming down the lower North Branch, however, remains a major reason why many downtown rowers and motorboat users refrain from using that reach.

- **Changing perceptions of water quality through boating activity:** One final point about boating and water quality that emerged from our interviews is how boating can help change people's perceptions about the quality of the river. This seems to be especially true when the river is experienced from the perspective of a small boat:

There's just such resistance to [the fact that the river is cleaner] because it's so ingrained, a historical thing that so many people take for granted. And I guess that's why I've always thought, it's only when you get someone down there that they begin to know the true nature of the river. And especially when you get them in some kind of a small craft...It isn't until then—when people start realizing this is a backyard playground—that their perceptions of water quality begin to change (Susan Urbas, Chicago River Aquatic Center).

Access and Facility Development:

Four different dimensions of access were discussed with respect to boating:

- **Access to the water:** In its most direct sense, access means the ability of boaters to launch their boats. For large motorboats and rowing shells, this type of access to the river requires special landings and other facilities. Small paddle boats, canoes, and kayaks often require no more than a low bank or gradually sloped shore from land that is publicly accessible.

The locations of marinas and boat landings where current boating activity occurs have already been described. In discussions about access, interviewees representing boating interests generally felt the river corridor had poor access for most types of boating. The upper reaches of the North Branch and its forks are reasonably accessible for canoes and kayaks, but although substantial public lands provide a route to the water, few developed facilities exist for launching. The lower North Branch and North Shore Channel have few places to launch canoes; although several public parks abut the shore, their river banks are largely fenced off. These same stretches have no developed public or private boat landings, although some boat yards might function as launching facilities. The tall vertical walls of the Main and South Branches downtown preclude small boat launching from public lands, and Marina City launching fees are quite steep. Launching at the old Coast Guard

Station is limited to Chicago River Aquatic Center members, leaving private lands at North Pier and Wolf Point (which was closed to launching at the time of the interview) the only places for carry-in launching. The Sanitary and Ship Canal has no developed access above Lockport, and canoe access is limited by vertical channel walls. Except for the marina at Alsip, there are no launching facilities on the Cal-Sag Channel, and ad hoc canoe access is similarly limited by vertical channel walls. The only places where access might be described as “adequate” are along the Calumet and Little Calumet Rivers, where private marinas, public landings, and riverbanks on public lands offer access opportunities for different types of boats.

- **Use of the water:** A second aspect of access that surfaced in our interviews dealt with the ability of boaters to use the river once they get to it. Access to waters for all boat types is affected to some extent by the physical characteristics of the reaches in the corridor. Some of these characteristics, such as water depth, are taken as givens, and pose as a natural barrier to restrict or segregate use. In other cases, accessibility can be increased or decreased through design and management. In the case of canoeists and kayakers who use the upper North Branch and its forks, river accessibility is hindered by some dams that are difficult to go through and for which portage trails are poor or lacking. Fallen trees and shoreline vegetation can also at times obstruct paddlers, although major obstructions are removed every year or so on most waterways by public agencies such as the Army Corps of Engineers. However, the degree to which navigational impediments, especially natural ones, are removed to facilitate recreational travel is a philosophical management issue that some have raised:

There's a school of canoeists that feels that essentially the river is a highway, and so you should keep it clear of trees on an extremely regular basis—not only trees that are down, but trees that are about to fall...and then you get into judgments. If you're going to have a riverscape that's natural, then that's part of the interest, and the obstacles just kind of go with it being a river. But to make something a safe highway for canoeists I think is kind of the wrong approach (Bill Koenig, Cook County Clean Streams and Friends of the Chicago River).

- **“Equality” of access:** The ability to boat on a waterway extends beyond the physical characteristics of the resource, for even if a river section is usable by a given type of boat, regulations might limit its accessibility. Few regulations in the corridor currently ban certain types of boating outright; one of these is that no motors except for electric trolling motors are allowed on the Skokie Lagoons. Some of our interviewees mentioned proposals for greater access restrictions on certain waters; for example, a ban on all motors in parts of the Skokie Lagoons, a powerboat ban on the North Shore Channel, and bans on the use of non-motorized boats on the Main Channel. Although these proposals may reduce perceived conflict and safety problems (see the next section for more detail on these topics), they in effect reduce “equal access” to the waterway for some interest groups:

[When our rowing club began in 1979] everybody thought we were crazy or tried to get us off the water; sometimes the tour boats would try and run us over. I think they were a little scared of us, you see, fearing we were gentrifying the river. And our point has always been, “No, let's have all these uses.” In fact...our vision has always been, that at different parts of the day there are different things happening on the river; and that's what makes it thrilling (Susan Urbas, Chicago River Aquatic Center).

- **Access to the shore:** Finally, the boating interests we interviewed felt access meant the ability not only to get to the water from the shore, but also to access the shore once you were in the water. In this respect, much of the Chicago River corridor is access poor for both motorized and non-motorized craft. For canoes, kayaks, and rowing shells, access to the shore from the river in downtown Chicago is hampered by tall vertical walls of concrete or steel sheet piling with few ladders. If a paddler or rower capsizes, there are few places to climb out of the river. Similar problems exist on the Sanitary and Ship Canal and the Cal-Sag Channels with the tall, vertical, cut stone banks. Downtown Chicago is also an attractive destination for motorboat recreationists coming in from the lake or up the Sanitary and Ship Canal from points south, but once there, boaters have few opportunities to dock and get out. Temporary docking is minimal and expensive, and overnight transient docking is very limited and difficult to find out about. Similar opportunities are lacking along the Sanitary and Ship Canal above Lockport and along the Cal-Sag Channel.

Safety and Use Conflicts

Because many of the problems related to boating safety arise from actual or perceived conflicts between uses of the waterway, safety and conflict issues are discussed together in this section. Other safety and conflict problems with boating the Chicago River corridor are independent of one another and are also discussed here.

Safety and conflict problems were the issues most often discussed by the boating interests we interviewed. Problems were both activity and location specific, including:

- **Recreational powerboat traffic:** Perhaps the most frequently expressed boating problem results from sheer numbers of powerboat users. Although the navigable portion of the Chicago River corridor stretches for miles and miles, powerboat use is concentrated around a few very small areas near the Chicago Locks downtown and the O'Brien Locks on the Calumet River. During peak summer weekends, traffic at these bottlenecks can be chaotic, and unwary or reckless boaters can create hazards.
- **Boat wakes:** Commercial barges and fast-moving recreational powerboats create hazardous wakes for small non-motorized craft. This problem can occur wherever motorized and non-motorized craft share the water; the most commonly referred to instances happen between rowing shells and recreational powerboats in the area of downtown between the Chicago Locks and River City. The wake problem is exacerbated along waterway stretches where

vertical riverwalls of steel sheet piling, concrete, or cut stone occur; these hard edges create a “bathtub effect” that multiplies the wake. Many people we spoke with mentioned this was a problem along the Cal-Sag Channel and the Sanitary and Ship Canal. Experienced small craft operators can negotiate most wakes if they are prepared for them, but for sudden occurrences or novice boaters, these wakes can capsize a boat. Speeding motorboats are occasionally seen along the North Shore Channel; such use is virtually unregulated here, threatening both the operator and other channel users, as well as creating wakes that damage the shoreline.

- **Concerns of and about commercial carriers:** For many years, commercial ships and barges were the sole users of the deeper reaches of the Chicago River corridor. As recreational traffic on the waterway increases, river carriers are seeing safety and conflict problems loom as larger issues in their day-to-day activities. These professionals are trained in operating safely on the waterway and are very concerned about some recreational boaters’ lack of caution and responsibility on the water. At a meeting of the Illinois River Carriers Association, one member’s comments captured the concerns and emotions of many of those present:

Our basic problem is, we’re out there working and they’re out there playing. There’s very little regulation, and there’s no enforcement. People don’t know, they don’t understand, that a tow boat with a bunch of barges can’t stop on a dime, can’t turn around. We’re working out there. There are too many pleasure craft, they have no idea. It’s a safety issue. We don’t want to kill anybody. They’re out there risking their lives, and they don’t even know it. It makes us all crazy because there’s not a pilot out there that wants to kill somebody, and that’s what we run into all the time. These people don’t understand. Half of them are drunk. They’re all out there boozing it and having a fun time just playing. There are no rules and regulations, and nobody’s enforcing anything. It’s dangerous. That’s what we’re upset about. There’s too many of them, and it’s dangerous.

In addition to safety concerns, commercial river carriers have been hindered by the general lack of knowledge or respect some recreational boaters have for established rules of navigation. This is especially true at the locks, where commercial carriers have priority; smaller, faster powerboats cut in front of the barges, in some cases making the barge operators wait an extra cycle to get through the locks.

Other than wake problems, recreational boating interests had few negative things to say about commercial carriers. Barges have decreased in use in recent years, move slowly enough for most powerboaters to easily avoid, and are generally wary of recreational users. At most, barges are an inconvenience because they have priority going through the locks and pleasure boats must wait for them. One marina operator on the Calumet River also mentioned that some barges run at night without lights, which makes them difficult to see.

- **A lack of regulation and enforcement:** The lack of regulation and enforcement mentioned by the river carriers

was echoed by marina operators, marine police, and other boating interests we spoke with. No operator’s license is needed to use a boat in Illinois, and although boating safety courses are widely available, boat operators are not required to take one. More and more novice powerboaters are being seen on the waters these days, and some of these novices lack knowledge of rules and ethics. In addition, the laws for operating a boat in the Chicago River corridor are weak or ambiguous. For example, the marine police we spoke with said the City of Chicago has no “no wake” ordinance on the books, and although the Army Corps has a posted “no wake” zone around the lock areas, most of the rest of the river is really not regulated. This is a definite problem and some marina owners have posted their own signs, but without enforcement authority outside officially designated zones, the marine police have to issue citations for “operating in a negligent manner.” Although the Chicago Police Department, U.S. Coast Guard, and Illinois Department of Natural Resources all have some authority to enforce boating laws, their ability to do so is weakened by very low staffing levels, multiple duties and jurisdictions of enforcement officials, and priority focus on the lakeshore and river downtown at the expense of the rest of the waterway. Enforcement problems are especially acute near the marinas on the Calumet River.

Finally, although waterways have long been highways of commerce, and more recently, recreation, the responsibility for safe operating procedures has historically been placed on the operator, not imposed by external rules and regulations. This idea holds both for how boaters interact with others on the water, as well as for how they ensure their own safety. In short:

Safety is found between the eyes. (Ralph Frese, Chicagoland Canoe Base, Inc.)

- **Drinking and boating:** Boaters can drink in the boat and drink and drive; they just cannot drive while intoxicated. Because there is no licensing needed to operate a boat in Illinois and no implied consent law, boat operators do not have to submit to a breathalyzer test if they are suspected of driving under the influence of alcohol.
- **“User unfriendly” waterway design:** As mentioned in the section on access, much of the Chicago River corridor was not designed for small boat recreation. Dams, vertical walls, and a lack of portage trails, ladders or other means of getting to shore create potentially unsafe conditions for boating.
- **Safety/conflicts with land-based recreation activities:** Related to the issue above, unsympathetic design of land-based recreation facilities adjacent to the waterway can also result in safety problems for recreational boaters. One controversy mentioned several times during our interviews relates to a proposal for the Forest Preserve District of Cook County to establish a canoe trail along the North Branch of the Chicago River. One of the concerns district officials have in designating such a trail is that the river flows through a number of public and private golf courses,

and the design of the courses, coupled with the sunken nature of the river, puts canoeists at risk of getting hit by golf balls. Proponents of the canoe trail say the risk is minimal, but both proponents and district officials feel that design improvements could make the water trail safer.

- **Personal safety problems:** In a few cases we heard about crime-related safety problems associated with boating at some sites. One of these sites was the Beaubien Woods Forest Preserve Boating Center along the Little Calumet River, where in past years those who parked their car and boat trailer in the parking lot risked vandalism. In recent years, however, the situation has improved, and use of the area has increased. In another case, a person we talked with mentioned that canoeists along the North Branch have had stones thrown at them and have been harassed by children from the bridges above.
- **Environmental impacts of boating:** One final conflict mentioned by some environmental interests we spoke with was the impact that boating has on plants and wildlife in the corridor. A representative from Audubon mentioned that motorboats could disturb shorebirds during critical nesting periods, but use levels are low enough that this probably doesn't happen much. The same feeling was expressed by agency and non-profit groups in referring to the trampling of shore vegetation by canoeists. But as one recreation provider put it:
The Forest Preserve and the Park District, they go to a lot of effort to provide horseback trails, bicycle trails, and hiking trails, but they ignore the fact that the waterways through their grounds offer a natural trail, and the only one that leaves no trace of your passing, and that's very, very underused (Ralph Frese, Chicagoland Canoe Base, Inc.).
- **Safety training:** Although this section has dealt primarily with safety and conflict related problems, our interviews also uncovered some positive things being done to improve safety and reduce conflicts. An important one of these is safety training. Clubs and organizations can be an important way for new individuals to learn about safety precautions; canoe clubs, rowing clubs, and powerboat squadrons often feature safety as the centerpoint in training courses and social activities. Local marinas and the marine police unit have encouraged boaters to have a "designated driver" who does not drink while behind the wheel.

Aesthetics and Nature

Four issues were raised about the aesthetic characteristics of boating:

- **Natural and cultural shoreline scenery:** As mentioned previously, an important part of the boating experience is what's seen on the shore, and the cultural and natural environment of the Chicago River corridor offers boaters many opportunities to be in aesthetically pleasing surroundings. The upper forks of the North Branch, the upper North Branch, the North Shore Channel, the lower Sanitary and Ship Canal, and the western half of the Cal-Sag Channel offer boaters extensive stretches of naturally appearing shoreline vegetation and the chance to see wildlife, which both add to the aesthetics of the boating experience. The

Main, South, and North Branches in the downtown area are renowned for their significant architecture and urban views, including many historic buildings and bridges. In addition to this contemporary cultural scenery, the downtown and southern reaches of the corridor are rich in cultural history, from pre-European archaeological sites, to artifacts from the early European settlement of Chicago, to more recent periods of industrial activity.

- **Natural and designed waterways:** In addition to shoreline views, the lay of the waterways themselves can offer aesthetically pleasing boating experiences. This is especially true for river stretches that have not been extensively channelized, such as the upper stretch of the North Branch and the original channel of the Little Calumet River. The winding nature of these streams, the riffles caused by rocks or a fallen log, and other water features contribute to the aesthetics of an outing. In other cases, designed waterways can offer similar aesthetic experiences and even heighten boater pleasure beyond what may have occurred naturally. Such is the case with the Skokie Lagoons, in which the original designers used many picturesque conventions such as curvilinear shores and islands to introduce pleasing view sequences and a sense of mystery into the boating experience. On the other hand, extensively channelized waterways such as the North Shore Channel, Cal-Sag Channel, and Sanitary and Ship Canals may offer good shoreline scenery, but the waterways themselves have been described as "boring" due to their straightness and lack of variation.
- **The aesthetics of boating activity:** All sports have their aesthetic aspects that cause people to appreciate them, and boating is no exception. Many boaters take pride in their craft and aesthetically appreciate the look and efficiency of its design. Motion is a significant aesthetic component of the boating experience, whether the boater is moving silently down a narrow stream in a canoe or speeding up a channel in a powerboat. Two types of boating are symbolic of the Chicago River corridor, and their activity has significant aesthetic features for participants and onlookers. One type is barge traffic along the Cal-Sag and Sanitary and Ship Canals, where the commercial function of the river is still very much alive:

Also that's part of the enjoyment for people sitting on a canal and watching [the river and the barge traffic]. I've got a favorite rock here I sit on, down where the lake spills into the canal. And I can just write poetry all day long if I want. Sometimes I do. I can bring my work out there and work on it in the summertime. And I'll see black crown night herons flying by and great blue herons and I'll see towboats going by and you feel like Mark Twain on the Mississippi. And those towboats remind you of those paddlewheel boats of the days gone by. It's neat (Bill Banks, Lake Katherine Nature Center).

The second type is the rowing shells on the Main Branch, which have special aesthetic qualities for those who row or watch:

The aesthetics of [rowing] are so beautiful. To watch it and the way they glide through the water. That's part of what

people like about it. You get into the rhythm, it's very relaxing. Running gets like that at some point. Only I think there's more motion here, so it's a little more intoxicating. Rowers are always trying to get a perfect stroke that sends them very efficiently, and once in a while they get that. As they get better, they get that more often. Rowers chase that, I suppose. Like some people chase a golf ball, others chase this perfect stroke (Susan Urbas, Chicago River Aquatic Center).

- **Detractions from waterway aesthetics:** Inappropriate land uses (e.g., shopping malls), over-the-bank dumping (including old cars), poor land management practices (e.g., runoff resulting in erosion), and poorly designed shore structures and facilities (e.g., retaining walls, stormwater outfalls, some bridges) were among the shore-based features interviewees felt detracted from the aesthetics of the boating experience. Fewer comments were made about the aesthetics of the water itself, though smells, water turbidity, floating fish, and other floating debris were mentioned as aesthetic nuisances in some reaches.

PROSPECTS AND IMPLICATIONS OF INCREASED BOATING ACTIVITY

What are the prospects for increased recreational boating activity in the Chicago River corridor? Overall, most boating interviewees we spoke with felt the prospects for increased use were “very good,” that increased use could easily be accommodated in most places, and for most parties concerned, would be a welcome thing for a river resource that many feel is underused recreationally. One major exception to this overall feeling came from the river carriers, who felt that increased recreational use would have a direct negative impact on their commercial livelihood in terms of safety and user conflict. In addition, other groups expressed reservations about increased use of given boating types in given locations. The prospects and implications of increased use are itemized in the following points:

Access and Facility Development

- **Prospects for canoe trail development:** Several people we spoke with mentioned the idea of a designated canoe trail as one way for increasing the awareness and use of the Chicago River corridor. Several trails or routes were mentioned, including:
 - 1) **North Branch canoe trail:** The most often mentioned canoe trail would be on the North Branch and its tributaries, beginning at Dundee Rd. on the northern end of the Skokie Lagoons and continuing down to the dam above Lawrence Avenue. Prospects for such a trail seem good, except for previously mentioned safety/liability problems near dams and golf courses along the route. These problems could be reduced through redesign, and information and signage could enhance the use of the route for safety, enjoyment, and education.
 - 2) **North Shore Channel trail:** This canoe trail would go the length of the North Shore Channel, from the Bahai Temple in Wilmette to the junction with the North Branch north of Lawrence Avenue in Chicago. Most of those who mentioned this route felt positive about it as

an attractive and safe route, although some were concerned about its shared use by powerboats, which are occasionally seen speeding up the narrow channel.

- 3) **Little Calumet River trail:** The original channel of the Little Calumet is technically not part of the ChicagoRivers study area, yet those who manage forest preserve lands along it noted that it has good potential for a canoe trail. With proper design and marketing, the Little Calumet could attract canoeists from the southern metropolitan region in the same way the North Branch and Des Plaines Rivers do or could do for those in the northern part of the region.
- 4) **Other potential routes:** Most people we talked with about potential canoe routes were much less enthusiastic about other stretches in the corridor. The lower North Branch, the river downtown, the Sanitary and Ship Canal, and the Cal-Sag Channel all have problems with competing water uses and related access and safety problems. It is one thing for a group of experienced paddlers to use these routes, but an entirely different matter to designate and publicize them for wide use. One public official said that because of the potential safety problems, it would be “irresponsible” for them to encourage use of the Sanitary and Ship Canal along the shore of their property. Others felt that with the Des Plaines River Canoe Trail nearby, there was no reason to designate a canoe trail on the Sanitary and Ship Canal.

In some cases, increased use of certain areas by some types of recreational boaters would not be a problem because potentially conflicting uses are not on the water at the same time. For example, rowers tend to use the river downtown in the early morning to take advantage of the calm waters and in doing so tend to avoid the heavier river traffic that occurs later in the day.

- **Prospects for increasing accessibility of opportunities for small non-motorized boats:** Park and forest preserve officials seem to at least moderately support developing access to likely stretches of the riverway for small non-motorized boats. Park officials in Glenview, Evanston, and Chicago were guardedly open to canoe landings in their parks, though the question of liability was raised by at least one. The Forest Preserve District of Cook County has reportedly entertained the idea of re-establishing the canoe livery that at one time was at the Skokie Lagoons; this would provide good access to a relatively safe and popular section of the corridor for novice boaters. As for other access along the proposed North Branch canoe trail, it would require little more than designating and developing “primitive” canoe launches and perhaps developing some small parking areas. Finally, one unique proposal for increasing access to the waterway for small boats is to create a central boating information/technical center and satellite neighborhood boating centers throughout the metropolitan region:

One of my dreams is that somewhere along the river in this area, the downtown area, there would be a technical center

for these sports or this recreational activity. And then that could be the center for all the information. People could come to learn there and get information about other spots on the river. But that eventually, in all the neighborhoods along the river, you might have little smaller boat houses, either run by the municipality, the local park district, or some private, where people could store things reasonably. To really use a body of water like this is difficult, and people don't do it very much, or regularly, if they have to haul their boat to the water (Susan Urbas-Chicago River Aquatic Center).

- **Prospects for marina/powerboat facilities:** Powerboats require a bigger investment for facility development than do canoes and kayaks, but many we spoke with felt there was a demand for more launches and marinas in some areas of the corridor. Such new facilities could be expected to significantly increase use and, if not located too close, would not seem to threaten owners of existing marinas. Potential areas for facility development include the North and South Branches near downtown Chicago, the Sanitary and Ship Canal around Palos, and the Cal-Sag Channel. Indeed, there are current proposals for marina development in most of these areas already. If the Forest Preserve District of Cook County did develop access to the Sanitary and Ship Canal through its Palos Preserves, that access would most likely be for powerboats. However, funds for new public development of this type are hard to come by, especially for land such as at Palos, where the actual shoreline property is owned by the Water Reclamation District. Forest preserve officials did note, however, that improvement of existing boat launching facilities at the Beaubien Woods Forest Preserve has resulted in increased use.
- **Prospects for development of other boating amenities:** If recreational boating is to increase, there must be additional places for people to go and do things. This includes private waterfront restaurants and commercial establishments as well as public amenities like parks and riverwalks that are at least partly oriented to boating. Those we spoke with on this issue felt it was difficult to predict whether increased recreational boating would provide the incentive for increased boat-oriented development, or vice-versa, but most felt there was enough room in the current market for increased commercial establishments to break in. One exception might be development on the scale of North Pier (a dining, shopping, and entertainment complex) that requires a large, four-season clientele to support it. Even at smaller scales, most commercial establishments would have to attract non-boating clientele, who would be the majority of their business. The climate for such development dictates a location near existing residential or commercial centers that is easily accessible by land—this might disqualify some stretches of the southern reaches that are isolated by extensive open space or industrial development. In other areas like the lower North Branch, land use policies aimed at protecting traditional industrial/manufacturing zones from gentrification might also inhibit the growth of recreational interest and development. Finally, one person we spoke with felt that some

sites with otherwise good development potential might have land and river sediment contamination that would inhibit commercial development.

Safety and Use Conflicts:

- **Potential for increased safety problems and conflicts with industrial land uses:** Several of the people we interviewed who represented industrial operations along the river corridor were concerned about safety and trespassing problems associated with recreational boating. Many of the industrial properties are not fenced off from the river, and access from the banks is feasible.
- **Potential for increased congestion and conflict with commercial uses:** The biggest potential impact on increased recreational use would be felt at the two locks on the waterway, which even now are congested during peak summer weekends. The route between the waterway and the lake is expected to remain popular for recreational boaters, and with increased use, both commercial (tour boats, barges) and recreational traffic would suffer. If present use and behavior patterns of current boaters are any indication, this increased use could also result in additional safety problems.

Some marina and commercial property owners we spoke with felt that if recreational boating in the downtown area increased, the bottlenecks at the O'Brien and Chicago Locks would force more boaters to use the riverway for recreation instead of the lake. This could disperse the increased levels of use to more places within the system, whereas most use is currently concentrated in a few areas.

- **Implications of limiting barge traffic:** Although no one we talked with proposed it, some barge industry representatives speculated that significantly increased recreational use of the waterway could spur initiatives to limit barge traffic. For river carriers, such a move would harm their business directly. Other companies would be indirectly harmed, such as Commonwealth Edison, who receives large quantities of raw materials via barge for the operation of their facilities. In other cases, even businesses that did not currently receive raw materials by barge would not want to see their option to do so limited.

In summary, the overall potential for increased use of the Chicago River corridor for recreational boating seems good. Problems that may occur do not seem to be insurmountable, and with the right planning and marketing, it may be possible to encourage recreational boating of given types in locations and times where conflict is minimized. The following quote from a land-based interest summarizes what the average person, boater or non-boater, might say about the prospect of greater use of the Chicago River corridor by boats:

I think that [greater in-stream use of the river] can only be a plus. That's my visceral reaction. If the river were more heavily used for recreational purposes, even for commercial purposes, if there were more barge traffic, it's going to make it all the more interesting a space. To sit at one of the benches and look at the water is one thing, but to see a stream of river traffic is some-

thing else. I don't know what the prospects are for river traffic. We used to see a cement barge come in here every once in a while, and whenever it did the bridges always got stuck. But the boat doesn't come around any more. Maybe the City discouraged it. But I think that adds great interest and I would like to see more of it (Hal Jensen-Chicago Riverwalk Corp.).

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING BOATING OPPORTUNITIES

An important objective in our interviews was to solicit ideas for improving recreational boating opportunities in the Chicago River corridor. Some of these ideas follow directly from discussions mentioned in previous sections on current and potential issues and are restated here without elaboration. Others are direct recommendations, reported below for the first time. It should be emphasized that these recommendations are from the interviewees and not from the author of this chapter. Furthermore, although many of the recommendations were mentioned by several interviewees, they should not be interpreted as statements for which there is a consensus. In fact, some recommendations might even conflict with one another. Rather, all recommendations are presented here without respect to priority, but are organized under the dominant topic they address.

Access and Use:

- Develop canoe trails at appropriate locations along the waterway.
- Develop neighborhood storage and launching facilities for small non-motorized boats.
- Encourage development of additional private marinas and public boat landings where facilities are needed.
- Encourage development of boat-oriented commercial and amenity attractions along the waterway.
- Install ladders every 500 feet or so along the vertical river walls in the downtown section of the river for emergency use, to make the river more user-friendly to small recreational boats.
- Create activities and facilities to draw boaters to little-used stretches of the corridor. In some cases, sponsored activities might draw people to little-used parts of the corridor:

If you had an activity along the Little Calumet River like you have with the Des Plaines River Canoe Race where a number of people are present, you would make people feel comfortable and safe...It would draw people back to the area. There isn't anything in that area now that would draw you to the river. Nothing other than our slips. Zero (William Granberry, Forest Preserve District of Cook County).

Safety and Conflict Resolution:

- Develop controlled access points for small non-motorized boats to ensure that those who enter are properly trained and outfitted before they venture out. Such points might be set up through boat liveries and neighborhood boating centers described previously. To rent or launch from the area, boaters would have to be registered at the center and either have gone through a training course there or have been checked out by qualified personnel.

- Expand and publicize safety training courses for powerboaters.
- License powerboat operators, and use all the fees from licensing for enforcement of boater regulations.
- Clarify responsibilities and authority for imposing boating regulations, especially in terms of "no wake" zones.
- Enforce a "no wake" zone in the downtown area and around marinas on the Calumet River. Such enforcement would alleviate many of the problems for small recreational craft.
- Expand the current staff of waterway enforcement officials. State enforcement through the Department of Natural Resources would be best, for the waterway goes through so many different jurisdictions that enforcement by local units of government is difficult. At the federal level, the U.S. Coast Guard has too many other duties to deal with boaters' moving violations.
- Expand dialogue between river stakeholders on safety issues. Some marinas on the Calumet River hold safety meetings with river carriers to let each other know about safety concerns and to suggest ways how they can be resolved.
- Zone the riverway for different boating types, or use design, incentives, or other means to segregate incompatible uses. Most we spoke with did not want to see an outright ban of recreational boats from certain waters, but many did see the need for dealing somehow with incompatible uses. Segregation by location or time of day tends to occur naturally for the most part, but as use increases, some types of intervention might be needed to maintain safe boating.
- Create opportunities and attractions at other areas along the riverway to disperse current concentrations of boaters, especially around the lock areas.

Aesthetics and Nature:

- Improve the aesthetics of the corridor throughout its length. There are many opportunities to enhance the natural and cultural scenery along the river, and doing so may also improve the river for other values such as wildlife and economic vitality.
- Replace dams along the North Branch with new dams of naturalistic design that are safe and exciting for canoeists:

A one-foot drop can create 100 feet of fast water. All you do is design natural wingdams on the boulders that pool the water so it cascades down a little at a time. This way you have an exciting run, plus you get away from the dangerous hydraulics that you have with a vertical dam. It's just something I would like to see done on the North Branch. We have several messy dams where people have dumped and wrecked their boats. There's no reason why in a Forest Preserve setting we can't create what would appear to be natural ledges of rock, whether it's concrete or whether it's real rock trucked in, and create something aesthetically interesting like that rather than a vertical drop. Dams do not have to be a vertical drop (Ralph Frese, Chicagoland Canoe Base, Inc.).

- Improve wildlife habitat by leaving downed trees in place along the river.

Planning:

- Create a vision for recreational use of the river:

What we lack is a vision of what should really happen along different portions of the river, different mixes of things, and so on. I think you need that, because someday there's going to be this floodgate of development along the river and it's going to be out of everyone's control and things are just going to happen, and again there'll be no reference...[For example, in a proposal for the 1992 Chicago World's Fair (that never materialized)] some people were talking about putting hydroplanes on the river. I don't think that would have ever worked...they had other ideas about submarines, and they wanted to make it a circus, and I thought that was so disrespectful...So I think if something's out there and articulated, that will help channel the process the right way (Susan Urbas, Chicago River Aquatic Center).

- Establish a river authority to coordinate planning and regulation of river use. One type of authority would bring together all agencies that have river management, enforcement, and decisionmaking powers. A different version might also include organizations and interest groups, who would act on an advisory basis. For example, in a recent proposal for marina development at the mouth of the Chicago River downtown, a task force was created to address issues and problems related to the design. Similar task forces could be created elsewhere to work toward finding common ground between diverse groups on conflict issues. Regional task forces could be created for different reaches of the river.

Promoting River Awareness, Providing Information and Education:

- Develop a technical information center downtown that is the source of information for boating opportunities in the Chicago River corridor.
- Expand boat tour programs. On stretches of the corridor that are little used for recreation, such as the Calumet, boat tours could show local residents what is happening with their river. This might help to revive interest and concern in the river as a recreational resource.
- Improve the system for finding out about transient overnight docking space at marinas on Lake Michigan. On any given day there are plenty of open spaces at the lake marinas, but little or no way to find out about them. Consequently, boaters coming up from the southern reaches have no way to stay overnight, so they turn around and head back. Such a system could increase boaters' options and enhance tourism in the downtown area.
- Develop a signage system to orient boaters and overland travelers to the waterway system:

One thing the river needs desperately [is a signage system]. I mentioned people's lack of geographical knowledge. Years ago, one of our guys wrote to the Illinois Department of Transportation and got them to put signs on all the state highways announcing "North Branch Chicago River." You see it along the Edens Expressway, you see it on all the state highways. We need to do that on every county road and every

community road. Every bridge should be marked for identification, and then I have something to go on those signposts. Little square signs like this, National Park Service signs, brown with white day-glo canoes on them. That should be mounted on every one of these identification signs on every bridge.

Interviewer: To show that it's a water trail?

You have to plant the seed of the idea. How many times have I gone down the river and somebody along the bank, cycling or just walking along, says: "Gee, can you canoe this river?" Well, my God, we're there in the water paddling fine (Ralph Frese, Chicagoland Canoe Base).

- Develop a comprehensive canoe trail guide:

I have strong feelings that if you declare it a Canoe Trail and give it a name, it attracts people...Using that same logic, you dedicate a "River of the Onions Canoe Trail," and you put together a little guide book...something we can sell for a couple of dollars. And I want it to tell everything from the geological history of the Chicago River watershed, why it's separated from Lake Michigan by beach ridges, how this little hill across the street is our Continental Divide, and explain all this, and then the history of Skokie Lagoons, how it was dug and why, and on and on. And then give people a blow-by-blow description, and I even want to point out the outfalls in that. What a combined sewer is, what a storm sewer is. The one outfall up by Edens Expressway, that it drains 11 miles of Edens Expressway and all the rainwater; that storm water gets pumped up out of the ground and through this 30-inch diameter pipe and that's why you see all the silt on the river here blocking you. It's because of that drainage, and on and on like this. I want to tell about the wildlife, the unusual areas. There's a stretch in Harms Woods, a high bank on the right. You go past there in October and the trees are all in bloom. Well, most people never notice this; it has to be pointed out to them. These trees bloom around All Saints' Day, so the old-timers called it witchhazel. But it has to be pointed out to people. Otherwise they drift right by, and they never notice it. So that in my way of thinking, a guidebook like that gives them all kinds of stuff, anticipation, what to look for (Ralph Frese, Chicagoland Canoe Base, Inc.).

FISHING

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Great Lakes and Mississippi River watersheds supply the Chicago River corridor with a recreational fishery of diverse indigenous and introduced species. The potential of this fishery is just beginning to be realized, for until recently most waters within the corridor were too polluted to sustain most species. Because of this, fishing in the Chicago region has long been dominated by opportunities on Lake Michigan, outlying lakes such as the Fox Chain-O-Lakes, and natural and human-created ponds in parks and forest preserves. Historically important recreational fishing areas within the Chicago River corridor include the Skokie Lagoons on the East Fork of the North Branch, as well as larger water bodies adjacent to the channel such as Saganashkee Slough off the Cal-Sag Channel.

CURRENT USE

Because a recreational fishery in the Chicago River corridor is still more of an idea than a reality, no creel census or other recreational fishing data have ever been systematically collected. In fact, the last biological stream survey by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (the principal agency responsible for fish) to sample fish at sites within the corridor was conducted over a decade ago. Activities by the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District and the Fish and Wildlife Service reported in other volumes in this technical series provide new information that has positive implications for increased recreational fishing. Combined with that knowledge, our interviews with park and forest preserve site managers, planners, and other individuals give us a “first look” at current and potential fishing in the corridor.

Both shore fishing and boat fishing occur in the Chicago River corridor, although the former is probably more prevalent in terms of numbers of anglers. For some boaters, however, it is difficult to separate powerboating or canoeing from fishing; for them, boats are seen more as tools for fishing than activities in and of themselves. Those who fish the corridor are demographically diverse, including young children and older adults, working class and wealthy, and many different racial and ethnic groups. Because of the marginality of the resource in most locations, those who fish the corridor (especially shore anglers) tend to come from nearby areas. An exception to this is the Skokie Lagoons, which tends to draw anglers from throughout the metropolitan region.

Fishing takes place throughout the corridor, but tends to concentrate around designated fishing lakes and ponds on or near the river. These sites include two fishing ponds at the Greenbelt Forest Preserve at the headwaters of the Skokie River; the Skokie Lagoons; a pond adjacent to the North Branch in Chicago's Gompers Park; Flatfoot Lake at the Beaubien Woods Forest Preserve near the Calumet River; and the larger ponds and sloughs of the Palos Preserves, including Saganashkee Slough and the Sag Quarries. Some fishing takes place on a system of spring-fed quarries adjacent to the Sanitary and Ship Canal in Lemont; these quarries have high-quality water but are on private land with restricted access.

On the river proper, two additional focal areas for fishing include the stretches of the Chicago and Calumet Rivers nearest Lake Michigan. These areas attract anglers for seasonal runs and increasingly for midsummer fishing. Some also fish these areas on their way out to fish the lake. The Main Branch of the Chicago River has been the focal point of several fishing derbies. In one type of derby, a part of the river is sectioned off with a net and stocked with fish, and anglers pay an admission fee to compete for prizes. The “Chicago Carp Classic” is another derby first held in 1994 to draw attention to the trophy-size carp that live in these waters.

Elsewhere in the corridor, use is spotty, and people fishing along the river are considered novel sights. Except for the ponds in the Greenbelt Forest Preserve and the Skokie Lagoons, the tributary forks of the North Branch are small and do not sustain a recreational fishery of any size. Below

the Lagoons, anglers are occasionally seen in forest preserves along the banks of North Branch, especially below the dams. Further down the North Branch, the “waterfall” dam in River Park north of Lawrence Avenue in Chicago gets consistent use during the summer by neighborhood youth. To the south, anglers have been occasionally seen on the South Branch and Bubbly Creek, on the I&M Canal paralleling the Sanitary and Ship Canal, on the original channel of the Little Calumet (from shore and by boat) by the Calumet Forest Preserve Boating Center, on the main channel of the Little Calumet at the Beaubien Forest Preserve Boating Center, and below the “waterfalls” of the MWRD's Sidestream Elevated Pool Aeration (SEPA) stations on the Cal-Sag Channel.

Designated fishing ponds and lakes are regularly stocked with fish large enough to catch and keep. Species include largemouth bass, channel catfish, and bluegill; as some of these waters improve in quality, game fish like smallmouth bass and walleye may also be introduced. The spring-fed quarries in the Lemont area offer opportunities for cold water fishing; the Sag Quarries in the Palos Preserves are stocked with rainbow trout. In designated waters, other management activities like removing submerged vegetation and installing underwater structures for fish habitat also enhance recreational fishing. Non-stocked species fished for on these and other waters include crappie, sunfish, bullhead, and carp. The fishery of the Main Branch is becoming increasingly diverse, with recent reports of 20 different species present. These include large and smallmouth bass, perch, crappie, and bluegill. Seasonal runs of trout, salmon, and smelt are also found here and on the Calumet River, though locks impede fish movement into these rivers.

Because no formal fishing data have been collected, it was difficult for those we interviewed to estimate the fishing levels on the corridor. Fishing on the stocked ponds and river mouths can receive “heavy pressure” at times, while use of much of the rest of the corridor is “sparse-to-mild.”

OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS TO USE

Water quality:

Two interrelated water quality issues that bear on recreational fishing were discussed by interviewees:

- **Impact of cleanup activities:** The fishing interests we spoke with credited increased recreational fishing opportunities directly to water quality improvements. The Metropolitan Water Reclamation District's water cleanup activities include reducing pollutants and increasing oxygen in the water. These activities have resulted in a greater diversity and quantity of recreational fish species throughout the Chicago River corridor.
- **Recreational fisheries management:** Most efforts at fish management are currently directed at the ponds and lagoons of the corridor. The premiere effort in this respect has been the Skokie Lagoons project, where dredging and restocking have dramatically improved the fishery and water clarity. Another water body that is being restored in part for fishing is Flatfoot Lake in the Beaubien Woods

Forest Preserve, just off the Calumet River. This effort, part of a ChicagoRivers demonstration project funded by the Urban Resources Partnership, involves youth and adults from the Fishin' Buddies program working with the Forest Preserve District of Cook County and other groups.

As water quality improves in the nearby Des Plaines River, which joins the Sanitary and Ship Canal near Lockport just below the study area boundary, that river is making a comeback as a recreational fishery with great potential. It has been suggested that fisheries in the Chicago River corridor could also be improved greatly as water quality on its reaches similarly improve.

Access, Safety, and Use Conflicts

Shore access and facility development for fishing was the major access topic discussed by interviewees. Shore access was strongly related to safety and use conflict problems, so these are discussed here together. For fishing, these concerns centered on the following topics:

- **Levels of access/facility development on public land:**

Forest preserve sites provide examples of the range of shore access for fishing in the corridor. Designated fishing ponds and lagoons generally have good access; fishing ponds at the Lake County Forest Preserves' Greenbelt site have walk-in (one-third mile) trails and shore areas that are groomed in places to facilitate bank fishing. The Forest Preserve District of Cook County's designated fishing areas are more developed, usually with parking nearby. The Skokie Lagoons and Saganashkee Slough sites also have new fishing walls built for disabled access. The district's boating centers on the Calumet and Little Calumet Rivers area are also developed to facilitate shore fishing along with boat launching. Other forest preserve land along the North Branch and tributary forks in Lake and Cook County do not have formally developed access for fishing. However, many stretches of the river lie close to roads or paved trails, and dirt paths paralleling the river provide informal access in most places. Finally, shore fishing access to the Sanitary and Ship Canal and Cal-Sag Channel from the Forest Preserve District of Cook County's Palos Preserves is limited by the character of the channel. The tall, steep channel walls make it difficult to fish from shore, and access to the shore from land is also difficult. An exception to this is the section of the Sanitary and Ship Canal paralleled by the I&M Canal Bicycle Trail.

- **Access to privately owned or leased land:** Shore access for fishing some areas along the tributaries of the North Branch, and the lower North Branch, Main Branch, South Branch, and Calumet Rivers is restricted by private land ownership. In some cases, companies do not want people trespassing on their property because of potential theft or disruption; in other cases, safety/liability questions are at issue. These restrictions on access might even extend to company employees for fishing on official breaks.

Access to private shore properties for fishing can also be restricted because of conflicts. For example, shore privi-

leges for fishing off some industrial properties in the Calumet Harbor area have been revoked due to past abuses by some anglers. Past littering by those fishing Ogden Slip interfered with other people's recreational enjoyment of the shore along the North Pier Terminal commercial development and caused managers to reconsider their policy on fishing access:

I don't know if you're familiar with what happened this spring, but I got somewhat castigated by the Outdoors Editor of the Tribune for being—my terms, not his—"the Ogre of Ogden slip," when I kicked the fishermen off the piers...They were leaving fishheads and bait and stuff all over the docks, and I had to get the docks cleaned up so we could have our restaurants occupy them. But God, they just went into a frenzy over this thing. It was really kind of interesting. So if there's a way in which I can accommodate the bank fishermen and keep it clean I probably will try to do that next winter. Otherwise, I'm just going to have to outlaw fishing off the piers. And to me that's sort of offensive because it is a recreational feature, but yes I can control the banks (Ron Haskell, North Pier Chicago).

Even under the best of conditions, however, some property owners might perceive shore fishing as conflicting with their programmed uses of the banks. This is especially true as the development of urban riverwalks draws more and more people to the water's edge. This conflict concerns some fishing interests we interviewed, who see fishing as a traditional use of the water potentially being displaced by new uses. The major concern for such displacement is in the downtown sections of the corridor.

- **Access, safety, and the fencing issue:** River access along the North Shore Channel and lower North Branch in the city of Chicago is restricted by chain link fences on park land. In some popular areas, such as by the "waterfall" in the Chicago Park District's River Park, this fencing does not prevent youths from ducking under it or through a hole to go fishing:

The only active recreation use [of the river] is fishing, and they have to go through fences to get at it. It's not really accessible to fishing...[I don't mind them fishing there], but you know we've had many, maybe six drownings since I've been here [22 years]. On the other side of the river that's the only waterfall in Chicago, so it really attracts the kids, which is not really good either; because we've had a drowning here as a result of that. It's always been a battle between the Reclamation District and the Park District and the Police Department for who's responsible for that area (Bob Kushnir, Chicago Park District).

In some cases, fencing has prevented safety professionals from getting heavy equipment over it to rescue those in need. For this and other reasons, new Water Reclamation District criteria along leased sections of the river will eliminate fencing. Ronan Park, a joint park development project by the Water Reclamation District and the Chicago Park District on the North Branch, will be among the first parks in this part of the waterway to provide open access to the river for fishing and other interactive water uses.

- **Personal safety:** Until recently, fishing at Flatfoot Lake and the Beaubien Boating Center in the Beaubien Woods Forest Preserve was not considered safe. The areas were basically abandoned by the forest preserve because of gangs and crime, and the public was cautioned about using the facilities. New management of the preserve has helped reclaim these sites for fishing; increased maintenance and surveillance, removal of vegetation to increase visibility, an active stocking program at Flatfoot Lake, and other activities have helped bring safety and people back to the preserve. A major impetus for taking back Flatfoot Lake has been the Fishin' Buddies youth program, which uses the lake for outings and is assisting with the rehabilitation program described earlier. Elsewhere in the corridor, youth gangs sometimes use the waterfall site in River Park on the North Branch, interfering with fishing activity there.
- **Safety of fish consumption:** There is some question whether the fish caught out of the corridor's waters are safe to eat. Some we talked with felt fish from the harbor, ponds, and headwater areas were generally safe, but fish further downstream (including the lower North Branch, South Branch, Sanitary and Ship Canal, and Cal-Sag Channel) were not. Although most fishing in these downstream waters is thought to be done purely for recreation, there is concern about the health effects on those who might fish the waters for food.

Aesthetics and Nature:

Discussion here uncovered the following topics:

- **Aesthetics of fishing:** Although the levels of contaminants in fish caught on some reaches may make them unsafe to eat, most people who fish in the corridor do so for the same reasons that others fish in cleaner, less urban waters. Children seek adventure fishing along the river, older adults see it as a way to relax, and most find that fishing by the river provides a means of escape and contact with nature, even in the most urban of stretches.
- **Fishing as nature-recreation:** Nature-based recreation in city parks has been called an elitist activity by some park providers and interest groups, who argue that a greater proportion of limited funds should be spent on recreation activities and programs that serve more mainstream users. One park designer we interviewed, however, maintains that fishing is one nature-dependent recreation activity that does have a broad user constituency, but that fishing opportunities are quite limited in most Chicago parks. Fencing, channelized streams, poor fish habitat, and other barriers restrict fishing activity, but a stronger emphasis on natural streambank design and management could enhance shore fishing opportunities.

PROSPECTS AND IMPLICATIONS OF INCREASED FISHING ACTIVITY

As stated at the outset of this section, fishing is an activity whose potential in most places in the corridor is just beginning to be realized. As water quality continues to improve and recreational fisheries management becomes a serious

endeavor, our interviewees felt fishing would no doubt expand both in the numbers of anglers and the places that are fished. Use at some locations, such as the Skokie Lagoons, is expected to increase dramatically in the near future as a result of rehabilitation efforts. Use at other places will increase more slowly as their waters recover without much active management. When we posed the question of increased fishing activity to our interviewees, several related issues were raised.

Water and Resource Quality:

- **Potential for increased knowledge and awareness of resource quality:** Water clarity is a primary indicator of water quality to many people, but clarity or other visible indicators do not attract people's attention as much as seeing people fishing on the water does. Although some who see people fishing question whether the water is clean enough for people to eat the fish they catch, the fact that fish even exist in the river is a major indicator of improving resource quality. As one person we spoke with observed, this level of awareness most often begins with those living near the water:

The people who live near the inland waterways know that you can actually catch a fish in it, and when they see that it doesn't have great scabby ugly things on it—I mean, that you can catch a real live fish—they're quite impressed. With people that have some kind of contact with the waterway, the impression has improved and continues to improve... (David Bielenberg, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District).

- **Limited view of benefits received from investments in stream management:** The case for expanding governmental activities for recreational fishing was tempered by the realities of trying to implement such programs where limited benefits might be seen by those who pay for them. Residents in the headwater areas may not be receptive to watershed management activities such as shoreland and non-point source regulation, land acquisition, and tax increases that would improve recreational fisheries downstream from where they live. Some interviewees felt it was critical that watershed management go hand-in-hand with recreational fisheries management, but thought getting such activities approved at the local level would be difficult if direct benefits to residents could not be shown.
- **Maintaining the sustainability of recreational fisheries:** Traditional urban fisheries management has largely been relegated to stocking ponds with catchable-size fish that can survive long enough to be caught. These "put and take" fisheries are appropriate for many shallow ponds that freeze out (are depleted of oxygen) during the winter and are a good way to introduce children and other newcomers to the sport of fishing. Management of this type, however, is not cost effective or desirable for river fisheries. Increased fishing pressure in the corridor could wipe out much of the gain in fish quantity and type that has been realized through water quality improvement efforts. This might especially be true in the upper reaches of the corridor where carrying capacities for both fish and anglers are low.

Access and Facility Development:

- **Potential for opening up new areas to fishing:** As demand for fishing increases in the corridor, there is potential to develop new and existing resources for fishing. Interviewees mentioned the possibilities of allowing fishing on places currently closed to fishing such as Lake Katherine adjacent to the Cal-Sag Channel in Palos Heights, acquiring river edge properties or nearby ponds currently in private ownership such as the Lemont Quarries adjacent to the Sanitary and Ship Canal, and incorporating fishing into new park design such as the planned Chinatown Park along the South Branch. New forest preserve development for fishing will expand access opportunities for those with disabilities.
- **Prospects for expanded recreational fisheries management programs:** The Illinois Department of Natural Resources recently expanded its commitment to urban fisheries by creating a new district for Cook County. The fish biologist assigned to this district sees a greater emphasis being placed on monitoring and enhancement of the fisheries potential in the Chicago River corridor, in conjunction with other groups. Those who spoke about fish management in the Cook County forest preserves felt that good work was being done but that the program was seriously underfunded. In addition, forest preserve activities need to be expanded to manage streams in addition to the inland ponds and lakes that are the current focus of attention.

Safety and Use Conflicts:

- **Consumption, health problems:** As fishing increases, more people could look to the corridor as a source of food. In some areas of the corridor, fish consumption will continue to be a health risk even if the waters have been substantially improved. This continued risk is due to bottom sediments contaminated from past industrial activities, which can affect bottom feeding species such as carp and bullhead.
- **Potential for increased use restrictions/prohibitions:** Increased shore fishing could result in increased use restrictions or prohibitions on private land currently open to use. Abuse of privileges through littering or other inappropriate behavior as well as increased fear by owners of being held liable for accidents occurring on their property are reasons for past land closures, and could become more widespread as fishing activity expands in popularity and location of activity.
- **Potential for increased use conflicts:** Commercial and residential development and increasing urbanization and gentrification of the shoreline, especially near the downtown area, may result in conflicts and displacement of traditional shoreline recreation activities such as fishing.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING FISHING OPPORTUNITIES

Most of the recommendations we received for improving recreational fishing opportunities in the corridor related to

planning, management, and development. These recommendations include:

- **Incorporate fishing and other shore-oriented activities into new park development:** It is often easier to incorporate uncommon activities such as fishing into new park development than to try and change established policies and patterns of use at existing facilities. Two examples here are the designs for new Chicago Park District park development along the North Branch (Ronan Park) and South Branch (Chinatown Park), and the five new parks developed by the Water Reclamation District at their SEPA stations on the Cal-Sag Channel. The designs include unfenced, accessible shorelines that can accommodate fishing. As additional shoreline recreation sites are developed, similar access issues for fishing and other shore activities should be addressed.
- **Develop new management and regulatory frameworks for evolving urban fisheries:** Following the concern about sustainable fishery resources described earlier, fisheries managers need to look at innovative ways to manage and regulate urban fisheries. “Catch and release” is becoming an increasingly accepted way for managing rural and wildland fisheries, and novel programs that test the skills of the angler or otherwise limit the amount harvested are being used around the country. For example, the Lime Pits in Lakeland, Florida, are a series of spring-fed quarries much like those along the Sanitary and Ship Canal in Lemont. The conservation department in Florida acquired these pits and manages each one for a different recreational experience. Catch and release, trophy fishing, fly fishing only, and children-only fishing are some options that could be tried on the Lemont quarries, forest preserve lakes, or headwater stretches of the North Branch to maintain the sustainability of fish populations.
- **Identify and examine new opportunities for fishing:** This includes public acquisition of river edge and nearby ponds for fishing, such as the Lemont quarries; expansion of access to public properties near good fishing areas, such as the breakwall in the Inner Harbor at the mouth of the Chicago River; and securing of public access to private properties such as along the shores of Calumet Harbor.
- **Expand public fisheries management programs:** Urban fisheries programs of the forest preserve districts and the Department of Natural Resources could be expanded to move beyond pond stocking and more into stream habitat management, increased monitoring, and other improvement activities. Some of these activities could benefit from federal assistance programs, while others might rely on partnerships with private sector companies and non-profit groups.
- **Expand work with volunteer groups to improve recreational fishing programs:** Fisheries management must increasingly rely on volunteer groups to help do the work that needs to be accomplished. The Fishin’ Buddies and other fishing and conservation groups can provide valuable assistance in monitoring, habitat restoration, and other activities needed to improve recreational fisheries.

- **Education and information programs needed for fishing:** A better network is needed to inform anglers of waterway fishing opportunities, as well as to caution those who currently do fish about the potential health hazards of eating fish from certain waters. This information needs to be based on an expanded program of research and monitoring that accurately assesses the risks involved in eating various species from different locations along the waterway.

TRAILS

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Trails have long played an important role in the spectrum of recreation opportunities provided by parks and forest preserves in the Chicago River corridor. Ancient game trails and Indian portage routes paralleling watercourses evolved into today's recreational foot paths for river exploration by children and adult nature lovers. Some of the larger Chicago parks have formally designated systems of bicycle paths, carriage paths, and walking paths dating from the turn of the century. In the forest preserves, developed trail networks were built for controlling use and enhancing recreational experiences; these trails catered mainly to hikers and equestrians, and many of them were built by the Civilian Conservation Corps during the 1930s. These trails quickly became popular; in the post-war years more than 100 stables were developed on private land adjacent to Forest Preserve District of Cook County trails, with more than 4,000 horses for hire to the public. The first forest preserve bicycle trail in the Chicago area was developed along the Salt Creek in 1965 as an "experiment" by the Forest Preserve District of Cook County. The success of this small trail and the nearby Illinois Prairie Path, the nation's first rail-trail, encouraged the district the following year to plan its first major trail, a 20-mile alignment along the North Branch. The entire route was not completed until 1982, but by then demand for bike trail recreation had increased significantly, and Cook County and other forest preserve and park districts had embarked on additional trail planning and development. These activities signaled the birth of the modern greenway movement in Chicago, and metropolitan planners looked to green corridors for filling the demand for environmental and recreational opportunities in an era when land and funds for land acquisition were in short supply. Efforts by the non-profit group Openlands Project and the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission, in cooperation with other agencies, resulted in a 1992 plan for greenways development in the region. The Chicago River corridor forms an important part of this plan, and a system of existing and proposed trails would interlink virtually every reach in the corridor.

CURRENT USE

Current trail use in the corridor follows the same three types of trails discussed in the historical context above, and includes:

Footpaths: These trails are usually single-track dirt paths that cross most undeveloped (i.e., forest, field) public and private open spaces. Footpaths parallel the river in many cases or link places of interest. Some of these trails can be quite wide and relatively permanent; others are barely visible and may fade out over time as people discontinue use. Footpaths are used by children, nature enthusiasts of many types, cross-country skiers, anglers, and, increasingly, mountain bike riders. Because most of these trail networks are unplanned, there is little information on the density of this network or total length. Use is sparse in most cases, though footpaths leading from developed areas of parks or neighborhoods to popular areas such as river dams can be moderately trafficked.

Footpath systems were mentioned by those we interviewed as being prevalent in nearly every reach in the corridor. On the upper forks of the North Branch, informal footpaths wind through private and public open land, such as the network that links the Lake County Forest Preserves' Lake Bluff site with private conservancy lands to the north and south. Many forest preserve ecological restoration sites along the upper corridor, such as Lake County's Middle Fork Savanna and Berkeley Prairie (Reach 2) and Cook County's North Branch Restoration Project sites (Reaches 2, 3, and 5) also have their own footpath systems. Some of the most "developed" foot trails parallel the main stem of the North Branch where it flows through the forest preserve lands; these wider trails receive heavier use and are even included as part of the official Chicago River Trail Walking Tour in the Friends of the Chicago River's map series. On the North Shore Channel and further down on the North Branch (e.g., Ravenswood neighborhood of Chicago), foot trails parallel the steep wooded banks along Water Reclamation District property, and in some neighborhood areas residents have developed informal seating areas. The vacant industrial lands along the South Branch are also laced with footpaths, and wooded "Amazon" areas are used by children for nature exploration. Water Reclamation District frontage along the Sanitary and Ship Canal and Cal-Sag Channel and adjacent forest preserve land also includes footpath systems. Also along the Cal-Sag, packed spoil stone left from construction of the canal provides challenging micro-topography for mountain bike trails along the banks.

Developed trails: Developed trails are planned trails that follow a designated route through a public open space area. They are often looped networks that provide users with various options in length, difficulty, and location. Most developed trails are hardened with gravel or other material that prevents them from being eroded from use or washed out by rain, but they are not usually of sufficient standards to be desirable for use by narrow-tired bicycles. Developed trails occur in most of the larger forest preserve sites and are used for horse riding, hiking, cross-country skiing, mountain biking, and other uses. Although there were no statistics available for trail mileage along the Chicago River corridor, the Forest Preserve District of Cook County reports having more than 175 miles of developed trails throughout all its sites.

With increased suburban development and liability concerns, commercial stables near the corridor have decreased markedly in number from earlier times, although private horse owners continue to use the trails. Mountain bike use of developed trails has increased rapidly over the past few years, and the Palos Preserves is one of the most popular areas in the metropolitan area for such activity. Mountain bike rallies at the Palos Preserves have attracted several hundred participants. Cross-country skiing is also popular at Palos and other preserves in the corridor that have developed trails.

Multiple-use bicycle-grade trails¹: These trails differ from developed trails in that they are most often engineered and maintained to facilitate use by narrow-tire bicycles. They are paved with asphalt or crushed limestone screenings; are wide enough to accommodate high use; and tend to be linear instead of looped, with lengths ranging from individual trails of less than one mile to interlinked multi-trail networks that extend for tens of miles. These trails cater to a diverse clientele that include not only bicyclists, but also walkers and runners, in-line skaters, parents with babies in strollers, and people in wheelchairs. Seasonal use may include cross-country skiing and/or snowmobiling, but some sections are plowed and maintained for year-round pedestrian and bicycle use. Most trails of this kind are used mainly by local residents (within 5 miles), but longer trail networks can attract visitors from across a region and even out of state—one example of the latter is the I&M Canal State Trail just south of the ChicagoRivers study area. Use on popular metropolitan trails can be very high on nice summer weekends; monitoring of the North Branch Bicycle Trail at the Skokie Lagoons showed more than 500 bicyclists per hour (3,000 per day) during peak use times, with annual use estimated at more than a quarter million visits.

There are currently more than 200 miles of multiple-use bicycle-grade trails within the metropolitan area. About 50 miles of these trails are along or adjacent to the Chicago River corridor; these include the 20-mile North Branch Bicycle Trail (sections of Reaches 2, 3, and 5) and the 9-mile I&M Canal Bicycle Trail (Reach 8), both developed by the Forest Preserve District of Cook County; the 7-mile (discontiguous) North Shore Channel Bikeway in Evanston, Skokie, and Chicago; and a 3-mile gravel section of the Centennial Trail developed by the Forest Preserve District of Will County (Reach 9). The Chicago Park District maintains bicycle-grade paths through many of its river parks, and some suburban park districts have developed spur trails linking their properties with other trail networks. An example of such a spur trail is the one developed by the Village of Palos Heights along a Commonwealth Edison powerline right-of-way, linking the Lake Katherine Nature Center with the Forest Preserve District of Cook County's Tinley Creek Bicycle Trail. Finally, a few self-contained bicycle-grade trails lie adjacent to the corridor, such as the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County's 8.5-mile Waterfall Glen Trail.

¹Some of the information for this section on current use is based on previous research reported in Gobster (1990) and Gobster (1995).

In addition to these three major trail types, other paths, routes, and/or trail designations are found in the corridor. These include dedicated cross-country ski trails such as the Maple Lake Area trails in the Palos Preserves (near Reaches 8 and 10); urban riverwalks, notably the Chicago Riverwalk in Chicago's Loop (Reaches 5, 6, 7, and part of 8); historic trails such as the Gaylord Donnelly Canal Trail (formerly, the Lockport Historic Trail) (Reach 9); guided and self-guided walking tours, notably the Friends of the Chicago River's Chicago River Trail Walking Tour map series (covering Reaches 5, 6, 7, and part of 8); and unmarked and self-guided nature trails, such as the nature trail network at the Lake Katherine Nature Center (Reach 10). Water trails, another type of trail, were discussed in the boating section. Whether existing as separate trails or as a designation of one of the three main trail types already discussed, these systems extend the range of recreational trail opportunities in the corridor.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS TO USE

Because development of a trail network along the Chicago River corridor is still somewhat in its early stages, there was not a lot of discussion about issues relating to current trail use. The topics that were mentioned included the following:

Access:

- **Public access to the waterfront:** Although many footpaths, developed trails, bicycle-grade trails, and other trail types are on public land in the corridor, there are many places where private land ownership or leases restrict access. In other cases, primitive footpaths are the only opportunities existing on public lands, limiting the appeal and accessibility of the waterfront.
- **Fragmented network of trails:** Where trails do exist along or near the waterfront, they may not be continuous. This is especially the case with bicycle-grade trails in the upper and lower reaches of the corridor (i.e., above and below the North Branch Bicycle Trail), and with the Chicago Riverwalk in Chicago's Loop. This current fragmentation decreases the usability of existing trail segments and their attractiveness to non-local users.

Safety and Use Conflicts:

- **Current high levels of use:** The only area of the corridor where high trail use was mentioned as a potential problem was along the North Branch Bicycle Trail, where one forest preserve district official felt that crowding might detract from the experiences that visitors seek, possibly causing users to go elsewhere:

I think there's a big percentage of forest preserve users that go out to get away from the crowd. Particularly along the North Branch Trail, on a nice summer or spring weekend day, I think the capacity is about maxxed out. There are people who won't go to those sites in high-use times just because of that; instead they'll go on a weekday morning when people are already at work. Some of the seniors or other groups that have that time available would be out using the system then (David Kircher-Forest Preserve District of Cook County).

- **Neighborhood relations:** At some locations along the North Branch Bicycle Trail, the route along forest preserve land comes close to private residences. Although many of these residents have come to appreciate and use the trail, some neighbors have complained about trail users and have been concerned about safety and crime.
- **Vegetation management for safety:** Trails require routine vegetation management to preserve sight lines for safety. Heavy use and occasional high-speed bicyclists using the North Branch Trail make view corridor maintenance especially important.

Aesthetics and Nature:

- **Trails as a means of accessing nature experiences:** The trail systems along the Chicago River corridor provide the primary means of access for corridor users to experience nature. This is especially the case for average forest preserve users, for whom a paved bicycle trail is the only way they would consider venturing into the wilder portions of the corridor. For example, many pedestrians, roller skaters, and bicyclists are attracted to the North Branch Bicycle Trail because of the views of the river, the trees, wildlife, and other natural features.
- **Impact of trail use on the natural environment:** On the downside, trail users can sometimes “love it to death” through overuse or misuse. Horse riders have eroded developed trails in forest preserve sites as have hikers, but recent concerns about ecological impacts of trail use have focused on mountain-bike enthusiasts who use single-track trails. In a few cases, we heard concerns from those we interviewed that mountain bikers have trampled flora at forest preserve sites along the North Branch and Palos Preserves where ecological restoration was in progress. A concern was also voiced that if mountain bikes are used at the wrong time and place they could disturb nesting birds.

PROSPECTS AND IMPLICATIONS OF INCREASED TRAIL RECREATION

Access and Facility Development:

- **Prospects for trail development:** Prospects for new trail development are excellent; many trails are beyond the conceptual planning stages, and some have been funded and are in the initial stages of design or construction. If all plans are realized, much of the Chicago River corridor will be connected by a network of trails, with linkages to many other trails throughout the metropolitan region and beyond. Currently proposed trails would easily double the length of the existing bicycle-grade system (now at about 50 miles) and add important new footpath/nature trails and riverwalk segments to the corridor. Proposed trails are briefly summarized below for each reach; see the reach-by-reach analysis in Part III for more detailed information.
- 1) **Reach 1 – West Fork:** Development of a new trail system through the privately owned Techny Basin, with linkages to communities along the West Fork and the North Branch Bicycle Trail.

- 2) **Reach 2 – Middle Fork:** Proposed development of a footpath/nature trail on Lake County Forest Preserves’ Middle Fork Savanna site, with linkages to other forest preserve properties on the Middle Fork and the Des Plaines River.
- 3) **Reach 3 – Skokie River (East Fork):** Proposed footpath/nature trail linking Lake County Forest Preserves’ Lake Bluff site with private conservancy land; proposed linking of the North Branch Trail to the Green Bay Trail.
- 4) **Reach 4 – North Shore Channel:** Proposed completion of a continuous bike trail system along the canal, with links to the North Branch Riverwalk and the Evanston Bikeway/Green Bay Trail.
- 5) **Reach 5 – North Branch:** Proposed southern extension of the North Branch Bicycle Trail, with connection to the proposed North Branch Riverwalk (LaBagh Woods to Lawrence Avenue); tie-in of properties along the southernmost section of the North Branch to the Chicago Riverwalk downtown (see Reach 6).
- 6) **Reach 6 – Chicago River (Main Branch):** Completion of a continuous, dock-level Chicago Riverwalk from Lake Michigan to Wolf Point, with connections to riverwalk sections along the North and South Branches and linkage with the Lakefront Path.
- 7) **Reach 7 – South Branch:** Completion of the Chicago Riverwalk from Wolf Point to Chinatown, with possible extensions along the South Branch to connect with the Centennial Trail, down Bubbly Creek to a proposed wetland park, and linkage with the proposed St. Charles Airline rail-trail.
- 8) **Reaches 8 & 9 – Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal:** Completion of the 20-mile bicycle-grade Centennial Trail with links to the I&M Canal Bicycle Trail, the Gaylord Donnelly Canal Trail (formerly, the Lockport Historic Trail), and other existing and proposed trail systems on the South Branch and Cal-Sag Channel.
- 9) **Reach 10 – Calumet River, Little Calumet River, and Calumet-Sag Channel:** Proposed bicycle trail along the Calumet-Sag Channel would tie in with the footpath system at the Lake Katherine Nature Center, the Tinley Creek Bicycle Trail, the proposed Conrail rail-trail, and other existing and proposed trails to the east and west.

- **Improving public access to the shore:** As water quality in the river improves, land in the corridor is increasingly being looked on as a resource too precious to be given over exclusively to private use. To increase trail opportunities in the corridor, development will need to extend beyond public open space to incorporate lands that share other purposes, including commercial and industrial development. Guidelines developed by the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District for its leased properties along the North Shore Channel and Calumet-Sag Channel stress public access, as do guidelines and other initiatives governing

development of private riverfront land in the city and suburbs. At a minimum, these guidelines seek a narrow strip along the waterfront that can provide public access for a trail or river walkway.

Safety and Use Conflicts:

- **Potential impacts on commercial and industrial development:** The commercial and industrial interests we talked with had mixed feelings about shoreline trail development. In the case of commercial space, some felt that public access via a trail could bring in more customers to shops and restaurants, increase the interest/activity, and in some instances increase the safety of spaces through the increased presence of others. In other cases, public access to commercial and industrial spaces was seen as potentially creating safety problems such as crime, injury, theft, and vandalism. This view was particularly true of the industrial interests we spoke with, most of whom saw little compatibility between the current use of their property and a potential trail right-of-way.
- **Potential impacts on nearby residents:** Some of those familiar with residential sections of the corridor, where proposals would require trail development close to homes, were concerned about a loss of privacy and a perception that crime would increase in the area.
- **Potential impacts on native plants and wildlife:** Although most we spoke with felt that increased trail use and development in the corridor was a good idea, a few voiced concerns that it could harm the fragile plants and wildlife that now exist in parts of the corridor, particularly in forest preserves, nature preserves, and wooded slopes along the North Shore Channel. As mentioned previously, some people were concerned about the increase in specific user groups, such as mountain bikers. For others, however, the mere presence of a new trail into an undeveloped wildland was cause for concern.
- **Potential impacts on nature-recreational experience:** Trails, especially paved bicycle trails, can attract and concentrate large numbers of users, such as those who currently use the North Branch Bicycle Trail during peak spring and summer weekends. Because many use forest and nature preserve areas as a means of escape from the bustle of the city, a few we spoke with voiced concern that bicycle trail development could harm the experiential qualities now provided by the natural environment of the corridor.
- **Impact on commercial river carriers:** Barge operators and other commercial carriers we spoke with were generally neutral on the prospects of increased use of the shoreline by trail users. Some were concerned, however, that development of a continuous dock-level riverwalk in the downtown area might require structures that would extend outward from the shore or float on the water. In our interview with the carriers, they stated that any such encroachments on the river could be navigation hazards and thus would be opposed.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING TRAIL OPPORTUNITIES

- **Aim for a continuous, linked network of trails:** A major goal of many planners and recreation providers we spoke with was to build a continuous, long-distance trail along the corridor that would link with other existing and proposed trails in a metropolitan network. In our interviews, some said that this emphasis on continuity was a goal for individual trail systems now being developed, such as the Chicago Riverwalk:

I don't know that [having a trail on] both sides is as important as that it be continuous. I think if it's not continuous, if people have to resurface at street-level and cross traffic and so forth, you'll lose a lot of the charm of the experience (Hal Jensen—Chicago Riverwalk Corp.).

- **Aim for diversity in the trail system:** Diversity was another development goal expressed by trail proponents. Diversity of trail development was referred to in the context of design qualities, types of trails offered, and types of environments traversed. Proponents were concerned about incorporating diversity both within and across individual trails. Again, with respect to development of the Chicago Riverwalk:

I think one of the very interesting aspects is that you will see a series of environments; you'll go through the back of the housings of some of the lift bridges, where you'll see the motors and the gears and the counterweight and all this, to see how these bridges actually operate. And then you'll have the more pastoral areas that are just green and benches and so forth...it's important that it not just be one, extended pastoral kind of thing. I think that because it's part of the heart of a major city, there should be some aspects of it that really speak to that (Hal Jensen—Chicago Riverwalk Corp.).

On the macroscale, the system of footpaths, developed trails, bicycle trails, and other trails should provide a spectrum of trail opportunities for diverse trail users.

- **Aim for an appropriate level of trail development:** Several trail proponents we spoke with mentioned the need to take into account the context of development when designing and locating trails for diversity. Just as the Chicago Riverwalk should celebrate the urban context, the design of trails in more natural areas should be sensitive to protecting and providing experiences geared to the natural environment. In unique natural settings like the Middle Fork Savanna, this might mean a low-key footpath instead of an asphalt paved bike trail:

Middle Fork won't even have the kind of level of development that Greenbelt has. Greenbelt has picnic shelters, it has a playground, it has a typical, "forest preserve" type of recreational activities; Middle Fork won't even have that. It really will be a passive trail system and recreation site. For one thing, it's more remote, and also it's higher quality, and we can concentrate our recreational efforts in other areas (Michael Fenelon, Lake County Forest Preserves).

- **Phase in trail development:** One concern voiced by a private commercial developer was that trail development proposals not “get ahead” of commercial development proposals for currently vacant land. In this particular case, a developer owns several large properties on the South Branch near downtown and is waiting for the right market conditions to develop the properties, but is wary that if not done right, trail development could become a liability:

...We prefer that people do not access our property at the present time. There's no reason to be down there, and we don't want people down there. And anything that causes people to be down there—we're not necessarily against it if there's a reason for people to be there—but we would be reluctant to say: "Sure. Here's your 15 feet. Come and go as you want." Because the next thing you know there would be campfires and...[But] if someone said: "Gee, here's what we're willing to do. We're going to put this path on your property. We're going to pay you some money. We're going to do this. This is how it's going to look." There may be a way that we would be convinced to do that (William Cromwell—CSX Real Property, Inc.).

- **Develop a signage system:** One final recommendation made with respect to trail development was to design and implement a signage system to mark the network of trails throughout the Chicago River corridor. This would not only serve practical purposes for directing trail users, but also serve as an awareness tool to the general public for whom the river has a poor to non-existent image:

[We need to do] things like demarcate trails and develop a signage system so that people know where the river trail is. The river branches and turns through many neighborhoods in the city, but in most places people don't even know where to look. A good signage system would be the first step in better educating the public about the river itself...so that eventually, people's knowledge of the river will be as good as that of the lakefront. (Miriam Gusevich-Chicago Park District).

RESOURCE BASED RECREATION AND EDUCATION

Appreciation of the natural and cultural resources of the corridor often takes place in the context of activities already discussed, such as canoeing down a river or hiking along a trail. For some enthusiasts, however, natural and cultural resources become the overriding focus of their leisure experience, governing where and how areas are used. For this reason, we have singled out a group of activities that hold particular importance in the Chicago River corridor. These activities include nature-based recreation such as bird watching, and culturally-based activities such as viewing historic buildings. Although such activities are usually not thought of as related, the unique fusion between natural and cultural resources in the corridor makes it logical to group both under a single heading. Indeed, many individuals we spoke with, whether ecologists or architects, found it hard to divorce the two. Such a nexus is also why much of the waterway studied for ChicagoRivers has been given status as the first nationally designated Heritage Corridor by the National Park Service.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The provision of nature-based recreation and education opportunities in the Chicago area largely coincides with the establishment of the forest preserve system at the turn of the century. As the system of parks and boulevards was being created within Chicago and its suburbs, visionaries such as Dwight Perkins, Jens Jensen, and Henry Cowles, and groups such as the Friends of Our Native Landscape, saw the need to develop a parallel system of regional parks with a focus on the natural environment. Distinguished from city parks by the newly coined term “forest preserve,” the purpose of the regional park system would be to protect important vestiges of the region’s natural landscape from development, and to supply nature-oriented recreation opportunities to residents of the region:

There the people from Chicago's crowded districts might have summer outings and freely camp, boat, fish, bathe, swim, pick and eat nuts and wild fruits, gather the flowers of the field and forest, see and hear the birds and other forms of wild animal life—close to the heart of Nature (Henry G. Foreman, 1904).

As the forest preserve concept evolved and as the first areas were acquired and used, ideas of appropriate recreation activities and locations were refined. In contrast to the idealistic notion of people romping freely through a Garden of Eden as quoted above, forest preserve charters laid down rigid policies to protect the natural environment, such as outlawing any harvesting or destruction of flowers, trees, and wildlife. Active uses were confined to the margins of the preserves, and except for trails, interior areas were left undeveloped.

Nature-oriented outings and activities by the Friends of Our Native Landscape called early attention to sites that have since become forest and nature preserves. This attention spawned interest in plants and wildlife among a wider spectrum of urbanites, who began using the wild areas of the region to view spring flora and fall colors, watch birds, and participate in other passive nature-oriented activities. In 1945, the Forest Preserve District of Cook County began developing a formal nature education program, appealing to individuals, families, groups, and schools with on-site centers, nature trails, and outreach activities. With the growth of the environmental movement during the 1960s and 70s, nature recreation increased in popularity, and gasoline prices and shortages made close-to-home nature recreation more appealing. Newly formed local groups such as the Openlands Project and the Friends of the Chicago River, and chapters of national groups such as the Audubon Society, focused attention on urban natural resources, both as a source for nature-based recreation and as something that needed to be protected and enhanced. Passive forms of appreciation continue to dominate nature recreation and education activities, but increasing interest in improving degraded natural landscapes has sparked a growth in participation in volunteer stewardship activities such as ecological land restoration and river cleanup and monitoring.

People have always been interested in the past, but opportunities to enjoy and learn about historical and cultural aspects of people, places, and events have long been confined to indoor museums. As the Chicago metropolis grew, many of the structures and sites from earlier times gave way to “progress” in much the same way as natural areas were sacrificed. It was not until the late 1950s and 60s that the historic and cultural preservation movement began in earnest in this region. This movement helped build a popular appreciation of our past, and sites, buildings, structures, and districts were protected as tangible evidence of our rich and diverse culture. Interpretation became an important part of historic preservation, and cultural interpretive trails, guided tours, and “living history” programs gave added meaning to direct experience. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, professionals began to think more comprehensively about protecting the historic and cultural “sense of place,” and cultural landscape preservation began to take hold in some rural areas of the eastern U.S. Designation of the I&M Canal in 1984 as a National Heritage Corridor further expanded the ideas of cultural landscape preservation to embrace industrial as well as rural and natural heritage, and it helped to improve the economic viability of the region as well as enhance leisure and recreational opportunities. Like nature-based recreation, stewardship activities related to cultural resources preservation have increased in recent years. Groups such as the Canal Corridor Association and the Friends of the I&M Canal National Heritage Corridor work on projects ranging from docent/interpretive programs and restoration and rehabilitation of historic buildings and sites to volunteer planning and coordination under the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s Main Street Partnership program.

CURRENT USE

Current use of the Chicago River corridor encompasses all the natural and cultural resource-based recreation and education opportunities mentioned in the historical overview. Major activities and their are described in the following sections:

Natural and cultural resource appreciation: Natural and cultural resource appreciation activities include birding, plant identification, the exploration and viewing of archaeological and historic sites, and related activities such as photography. Many nature-based activities require natural landscapes high in biological diversity or integrity, or areas that are important for certain plant and animal species, such as spring and fall bird migration stopover points. The Chicago River corridor contains a wealth of areas for nature appreciation. Areas that have long been popular for birding include the Skokie Lagoons and other forest preserve sites along the North Branch; the sloughs and marshes of the Palos Preserves, the Lake Calumet area, and the Chicago and Calumet River harbors. As a result of water quality improvements, the North Shore Channel was also recently noted as a site for waterfowl and shorebird observation, as were the main waterways of the Sanitary and Ship Canal and Cal-Sag Channels. Many areas along the corridor are noted for rare plant species or diverse plant communities, and more than two dozen sites have been

designated as Natural Area Inventory sites or Illinois Nature Preserves. These and other corridor sites identified in more recent inventories and assessments by the Chicago Department of Environment, the Chicago Park District, and the ChicagoRivers project are noted in the by-reach description in Part III of this chapter. Areas especially noted for their plant species and communities include the Middle Fork Savanna along the Middle Fork in Lake County; prairie, savanna, and woodland ecological restoration sites along the North Branch; a number of sites within the Palos and Lake Calumet areas, and the Romeoville and Lockport Prairies along the lower Sanitary and Ship Canal.

Many of the areas noted for their significance as natural areas are also important culturally. Numerous Indian archaeological sites were documented along the corridor in early archaeological surveys of the region, and some features, such as fish entrapment structures, are just now being identified in the North Branch forest preserves by Forest Preserve District of Cook County archaeologist Ed Lace. Lands in the Calumet and Sag Valleys were particularly important for Indian settlement and hunting. The 1673 “discovery” of the Chicago Portage (now the Sanitary and Ship Canal) by Marquette and Jolliet paved the way for European settlement, and settlement sites of Du Sable and Fort Dearborn along the Main Branch symbolize the birth of Chicago. Though many of these sites as well as more recent ones have long since been obliterated, the corridor remains filled with exemplary vestiges of the past century. From the banks of the Main Branch one can view a skyline of varied high-rise building styles that many say is unparalleled anywhere in the world, and the Main and South Branches offer an intriguing diversity of movable bridge types with styles ranging from functional to ornate. The waterways themselves are the most significant, if not conspicuous, cultural features of the Chicago River corridor. Waterway construction and improvement efforts included the 97-mile I&M Canal, 26 miles of which are in the ChicagoRivers study area and 20 miles of which still exist; the reversal of the Chicago and Calumet Rivers and construction major harbor areas; the construction of 54 miles of the Sanitary and Ship Canal, Cal-Sag Channel, and North Shore Channel; and the improvement of an additional 27 miles of waterway to transport goods and wastewater. The cultural history of this waterway remains very much alive and is appreciated through the experience of traditional (e.g., watching barges) as well as new recreational (e.g. boating) uses. And finally, the canal towns such as Lemont and Lockport and industrial areas and communities such as Pilsen (lumber docks), Bridgeport (Union Stockyards), and Pullman (Pullman railroad cars) that grew up along the corridor still retain much of their historic feel even though the activity that created them has died.

Education: As with natural and cultural resource appreciation, education can take place in many different ways and includes experiential learning as well as formal instruction. Defined for this section, education includes facilities and/or programs designed specifically for education on the natural, historical, or cultural aspects of the environment. In Lake

County, interpretive trails under development on the forest preserve district's Greenbelt site tell the story of the use, abuse, and restoration of the Skokie River. Further down along the Skokie River, the Chicago Botanic Garden offers nature education programs, including some that focus on the Chicago River. The Botanic Garden is also developing a river and landscape restoration project along the Skokie River on its grounds that will be added to the horticultural garden/landscape exhibits offered to visitors. The City of Evanston operates the Evanston Ecology Center and Ladd Arboretum on the banks of the North Shore Channel, offering programs and activities for school groups and residents. The Friends of the Chicago River, the Chicago Architectural Foundation, and other groups offer boat and walking tours of the Chicago River that tell about the river's natural and cultural history. Many of the city's institutions such as the Field Museum, Shedd Aquarium, and Academy of Sciences have offered additional educational programs about the river. In the Palos Preserves, the Forest Preserve District of Cook County's Camp Sawagwau and Little Red Schoolhouse Nature Center offer programs, instruction, indoor and outdoor exhibits, and a self-guided nature trail. Several museums, historic sites, and visitor centers along the I&M Canal National Heritage Corridor help interpret the corridor's important natural and cultural history. On the Cal-Sag Channel, public parks at the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District's SEPA Stations enable visitors to learn about water quality improvement efforts and techniques. Also on the Cal-Sag, the Village of Palos Height operates the Lake Katherine Nature Center, offering trails, programs, festivals, and other nature education opportunities. Finally, some schools in the corridor, including Glenbrook North High School in the North Shore suburbs and Northeastern Illinois University, Amundson High School, and Waters Elementary School in Chicago, have studied the Chicago River as part of their curriculum.

Volunteer Stewardship: Hands-on work in protecting and enhancing cultural and natural resources was once considered a responsibility reserved for professional employees. Increasingly, however, citizens are seeking opportunities to volunteer in stewardship activities, and public and private groups interested in seeing sites and areas restored are welcoming the value volunteers can bring to projects that often operate with very limited budgets. The range of volunteer interests is wide, and while some activities like the ecological restoration of native plant communities are becoming highly visible, many other stewardship programs are also contributing to the improvement of the resources of the corridor:

We're working with many different groups. There's a number of groups doing restoration work besides the Volunteer Stewardship Network. We are looking at the mountain bike problem, working with the Mountain Bike Manufacturing Association on an education program for bike users...There are a number of other groups that we work with. I can't even estimate the number of fishing groups that the fisheries biologists work with. Other groups have done projects for us; it's an astronomical number of users. Everybody that's got a special interest in some way or other contacts the forest preserve to try

and get what they need from us...For birds, there's the groups that are the more typical nongame type groups, that get into nest structures, bluebird trails, and boxes. And then there's the hunting groups, and many of them do projects for waterfowl, even though there's no hunting on forest preserve land. There's one like Ducks Unlimited here in the southwest suburbs; they donated 100 wood duck houses that cost \$30 apiece or something like that. The houses are scattered all through the Palos region for wood ducks to use, and even though they don't hunt in here, the group still provides that benefit to wildlife. A lot of things like that go on (Ralph Thornton, Forest Preserve District of Cook County).

As evidenced by this activity in the Cook County forest preserves alone, stewardship activities throughout the corridor are too numerous to mention. Prominent stewardship programs in the corridor profiled in Part II of this chapter include the North Branch Restoration Project, the Cook County Clean Streams Committee, the RiverWatch program of the Friends of the Chicago River, the volunteer programs at the Lake Katherine Nature Center run by the Village of Palos Heights, and the Main Street Partnership of the Canal Corridor Association.

Although many of the activities of volunteer stewardship programs sound like real work and indeed accomplish many of the objectives of the agencies and groups who run the programs, volunteers are attracted to such activities to fulfill various social, recreational, aesthetic, and even spiritual needs:

There is a "recreational," and I put that in quotes, side of restoration that is very important to people. Just getting outside. But also, maybe more importantly, is the desire to help, to actually do something useful and hands-on for the ecology...Really, this whole thing is kind of a healing art and I think for many people it restores a balance in their lives, decreasing their alienation from nature by getting right in there and getting their hands dirty...There's a real aesthetic quality that is very beckoning about restoration, too—different plants have different lifestyles, have different life cycles and have different feelings or energies to them, like a thistle is prickly and has a certain look to it, a little forbidding-looking. And then other plants are soft and more gentle and more approachable...I also think people are very interested in learning more about the history and settlement of this area...Also, as you start to get to know people of like mind and like feeling, there's a definite social connection through it all, too. And there's a very nice feeling of what we're doing as being a little bit weird, a little bit different, anyway...[Finally, involvement in restoration] can get to a deeper level of meaning. It starts to feel like we're really inhabiting this place in a different way. Like most people sort of skim the surface of the place. We get out there and get our blood, sweat and tears involved with the place. And get to know the lay of the land in a very intimate way. I've probably spent as much time in Miami Woods as I've spent anywhere except my house or where I work since moving here to Chicago. So there's a certain connection that's made there with the land (Robert Lonsdorf, North Branch Restoration Project—emphases added).

Consumptive nature activities: Besides fishing (discussed previously), other resource-oriented recreation opportunities that are consumptive in nature include hunting, trapping,

and harvesting wild plants. These activities are forbidden in all forest preserves, limiting opportunities to private and other designated public land.

Most municipalities prohibit the discharge of firearms within their boundaries, restricting gun hunting to the few unincorporated areas near the corridor, most of which are in Will County. An exception to the firearms prohibition is on the far south side of Chicago, where waterfowl hunting takes place on some private lands around Lake Calumet. Also in Chicago, a unique public hunting opportunity exists at the Illinois Department of Natural Resources' William Powers Conservation Area, where 25 duck and goose hunting blinds are available through an annual random drawing. Besides William Powers, few other public lands in the corridor allow hunting. Archery and trapping are allowed under state regulations, and are practiced on some private lands in the corridor with a success that is surprising within a metropolitan area. For example, the mosaic of woodland and agricultural areas of Cook and Will Counties south of the Cal-Sag Channel produces a surprising number of "trophy" bucks every year.

The harvesting of wild edibles is a popular activity that takes place in many wildland areas in the corridor. Wild edibles include nuts and berries familiar to the general populace, as well as mushrooms, leaves, and fern heads known only to aficionados and people of certain ethnic or cultural groups. Much of this harvesting happens on forest preserve lands in the corridor, and is thus done illegally. Finally, some places in the corridor are known for their drinking water, which is taken from hand pumps at certain forest preserve sites or collected from surface springs. Some believe these waters have health benefits, while others enjoy the water simply for its taste.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS TO USE

Most of the people we spoke with saw few constraints to providing cultural and natural resource-based opportunities for recreation and education in the corridor. However, three general sets of "threats" to the natural and cultural environment could directly or indirectly affect corridor opportunities. The greatest perceived threats to use came from pollution and development of the corridor that could degrade the present qualities of the cultural and natural environment. A second set of threats came from other recreational activities, such as mountain biking and canoeing, where overuse or inappropriate use could harm restoration projects or rare plant communities. The final set of threats came from those engaged in nature-oriented activities, where high levels of use or certain consumptive activities might degrade the environment.

On the positive side, many interviewees spoke very highly of the "fit" of natural and cultural recreation and education opportunities with other recreation and resource management objectives. In many cases, appreciative and educational opportunities can enhance visitors' recreational experiences of park and forest preserve sites—for example, those who come to sites for picnicking or bicycling. Moreover, steward-

ship and volunteer opportunities can help accomplish important resource management objectives and stretch the limited budgets available for these activities. Finally, several interviewees told us that the corridor provided unique opportunities to merge natural and cultural resource awareness and appreciation. This special blending can help guide the future development of the corridor for recreational and non-recreational goals.

PROSPECTS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR INCREASED NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCE-BASED RECREATION AND EDUCATION

Some specific proposals for increasing opportunities in the corridor for activities discussed in this section include:

- The Chicago Park District is beginning to restore natural landscapes in several of its parks, and is working with local community groups to accomplish this work. One of these sites, Gompers Park along the North Branch, has received funding for wetland restoration through the Urban Resources Partnership as a ChicagoRivers demonstration project.
- The Chicago Park District has also begun development of a park on the Chicago Origins site at the South Turning Basin. The park would provide recreation and river access, interpret the natural and cultural history of the Chicago region, and provide an urban gateway to the I&M Canal National Heritage Corridor.
- The Forest Preserve District of Cook County's Land Acquisition Plan takes a step forward in addressing nature education opportunities beyond its existing nature centers. Particular attention is given to opportunities within urban Chicago. The plan states:

In Chicago's core, the Forest Preserve District will focus on expanding its network of nature education and outreach programs. These existing sites could include schools, parks, community centers, and other public spaces that span Chicago. This initiative will also bring people from the city to the nearby preserves to enjoy, learn and work in a natural setting. Ultimately, the Forest Preserve District could explore partnerships with the City and the Chicago Park District to add new nature education centers and staffing to underserved neighborhoods of Chicago, as well as increasing the accessibility of the preserves to Chicagoans.

In early 1995, the district announced it would begin implementing this plan by hiring additional naturalists and purchasing a mobile environmental van that would reach into urban communities.

- The Forest Preserve District of Cook County has also proposed development of a Chicago Portage Interpretive Facility and Visitors Center at its Chicago Portage Woods Forest Preserve on the Sanitary and Ship Canal, to interpret the history of the Chicago Portage and I&M Canal.
- The Chicago River Aquatic Center has proposed a central technical information and skills center for boating in the Chicago River corridor.

- The Chicago Academy of Sciences received partial funding through the Urban Resources Partnership to develop and implement an environmental education program that focuses in part on the Chicago River ecosystem.
- In early 1995, the Friends of the Chicago River and the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago brought together a group of individuals and groups interested in river education to discuss the potential for developing a river education center.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING RESOURCE-BASED RECREATION AND EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

Nature and Cultural Resource Appreciation: Many of the park and forest preserve managers we spoke felt there was a strong need to enhance existing river properties for natural and wildlife benefits, and in doing so, strengthen the link between the river and recreational use. This might include improving opportunities for direct interaction with the river through activities such as fishing, but would also include designing and managing the river edge for viewing and other passive forms of appreciation. As mentioned previously, this might include removing fencing and other visual and physical barriers to the river proper. These changes in design and management may be easier to institute in developing new park and forest preserve sites, where competition for limited open space with other activities has not yet begun.

Education: Open space managers and other recreation providers generally called for an expansion of existing programs and facilities oriented toward natural and cultural resources education. As described above, many plans and ideas are in the works for increasing education opportunities in the corridor, and as these are realized, many we talked to felt that the river could become a major focus for environmental and cultural resources education in the Chicago area.

Volunteer stewardship: Many we spoke with also recommended expanding volunteer stewardship activities in the corridor and focusing these efforts on the river proper through river cleanup activities, monitoring, improvement of fish and wildlife habitat, and ecological restoration of native shoreland plant communities.

Consumptive activities: No specific recommendations were given for increasing any consumptive recreation activities besides fishing. Those we talked with about hunting and trapping in the corridor felt these activities were declining because of increased development and were concerned about maintaining access to private lands. Forest preserve acquisition is not a solution in this particular case, however, for such lands are off-limits to most consumptive forms of recreation, including the harvesting of wild edibles. Forest preserve managers we talked with on this subject made no official recommendations, but acknowledged that most harvesting of wild edibles is low-key, in most cases does little harm to the environment, and can be an important part of the ethnic and cultural heritage of certain groups who otherwise may not visit the forest preserves.

OTHER RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Today's parks, forest preserves, and other privately and publicly owned open spaces cater to a larger range of activities than the four types discussed thus far. This range reflects how our ideas of "open space" and "recreation" have expanded over time, and how such things should be provided to the citizens of a region. In Chicago, the parks movement began in the late 1860s, and early parks and boulevards were planned and laid out primarily for passive recreation such as picnicking and relaxing. Emphasis during this period of development was on linking the lakefront with prominent residential areas, and lands in the Chicago River corridor did not play much of a part in this scheme. The need for a regional park system was voiced during the 1890s to preserve natural landscapes and promote passive, dispersed recreation; this led to the creation of the county-level forest preserve system. The river corridors such as the North Branch and large tracts of wooded land such as the Palos area were targeted for purchase during this time. Around the same time, the city's elite also began establishing golf clubs, often catering to an exclusive membership. Lands purchased for these clubs often were low-lying marsh or farmland along river corridors, including numerous large parcels along the upper reaches of the North Branch.

Whether public or private, much of this early open space development was aimed at the well-to-do, with few opportunities available for the poor and working class of the expanding metropolis. The Progressive Reform era at the turn of the century changed that, and along with many initiatives to promote social justice came the neighborhood parks and playground movement. Heralded as "parks for the people," these smaller parks were located throughout neighborhoods of the city, and focused heavily on sports, programs, and other activity-oriented recreation and education. California Park along the North Branch was one of the early parks developed with such a neighborhood/activity orientation.

As suburban areas grew up around Chicago, many suburban parks were developed with similar goals in mind, combining passive and active uses on floodplain land that was difficult to develop for residential or commercial purposes. In recent years, many suburban municipalities have targeted river basin lands for more comprehensive park and open space protection, using acquisition and regulatory tools to achieve land use planning goals. In concert with developers, river basin lands are increasingly being considered as public and private open space assets, serving a variety of active and passive recreational purposes. From downtown riverwalks to wildland conservancy areas to private golf course communities, these park and open space areas provide a range of other recreational uses.

CURRENT USE

Other recreational uses that have not yet been discussed in this chapter are numerous, and those occurring along the

Chicago River corridor have been identified in the on-site survey and focus group chapters. Three main categories of other uses mentioned by those we interviewed for this study included:

Picnicking and related passive uses: The forest preserves in the Chicago region cater to a wide variety of activities already mentioned, but are perhaps best known and most heavily used for their picnic groves. With the forest and river forming an important scenic backdrop, visitors flock to these open and savanna-like sites from the first warm days in spring until the fall. The groves offer picnic tables and shelters, parking, restrooms, and related facilities, but are rarely designed with the same high level of development one might find in a city park. Pit toilets and hand-pumped drinking fountains are still found at some sites; although these are increasingly being replaced with modern facilities, most groves still have a rustic appeal, and some have unique stonework and other features dating from their construction by the Civilian Conservation Corps. Designated groves, available on a permit basis to groups, are often booked far in advance for weekend church and office parties and other organized events. From the Greenbelt Forest Preserve (Reach 3) south to Beaubien Woods (Reach 10), there are more than 40 forest preserve picnic groves in the Chicago River corridor. No reliable use estimates are available, but forest preserve use for picnicking and related activities is among the highest of all forest preserve recreation activities, and exceed several million visits annually.

Active sports: Municipal parks are also popular for picnicking, though most parks in Chicago or the suburbs do not provide grills, tables, or related facilities. Instead, these parks are often oriented toward active recreation, featuring both indoor and outdoor facilities for group sports and games. There are more than 30 municipal parks on the river throughout the corridor; most are located in the City of Chicago. Chicago Park District river parks include 6 “full service” neighborhood parks, 2 playlot parks, 6 passive parks, and 2 currently unimproved sites. A typical full service neighborhood park along the river in Chicago includes fields for baseball and football/soccer; basketball, tennis, and volleyball courts; one or more playlots; and a fieldhouse. Three of the largest Chicago river parks feature outdoor pools. These facilities are the principal focus of many people’s use of these parks, and awareness or use of the river is often minimal.

Golfing: More than 25 golf courses, country clubs, and driving ranges are located on the river, with many more close by. Most of these are on the upper forks of the North Branch; the East Fork alone has no less than 12. Most golf opportunities in the corridor are provided by the private sector, with some private clubs open to members only. There are a few municipal courses as well, and the Forest Preserve District of Cook County owns and operates 5 golf courses and 1 driving range in the corridor. The river is a primary aesthetic feature for many of these courses, and in some cases is used as an obstacle or challenge for holes.

This summary of other recreation opportunities available in the Chicago River corridor shows that in general, picnicking and other passive recreation opportunities are largely the domain of the forest preserves, while active sports and related opportunities are usually provided by municipal park districts, and golfing opportunities are often associated with the private sector. There are, however, important exceptions to these generalizations. For example, the Lake County Forest Preserve’s Greenbelt site provides a relatively high level of facility development, geared toward nearby urban and suburban areas that are lacking in park facilities; and the Forest Preserve District of Cook County operates its Whealan Pool facility on the North Branch. Conversely, several municipal parks are oriented towards passive use, and include few facilities beyond benches and paths designed for river appreciation. Finally, the Forest Preserve District of Cook County is an important supplier of public golfing opportunities; its courses and driving range are well used and among the most popular in the region.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS, PROSPECTS FOR INCREASED USE, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING OTHER RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

Because activities falling into the “other recreation” categories were not explicitly discussed in our interviews, we did not systematically address questions relating to problems and opportunities, implications for increased use, or recommendations. However, some points relating to these other activities arose in our interviews, and we report them below.

- Development of the Chicago Park District’s new Chinatown, Ronan, and Du Sable Parks along the river offers good opportunities to orient park design and passive activities to the natural river environment, including improvement of access to the river edge. Issues such as fencing are being dealt with so that new development and related uses will embrace the river landscape rather than ignore it or treat it as a liability. These parks could become prototypes for future park rehabilitation in the corridor.
- Likewise, it is doubtful that new forest preserves along the river will concentrate on “full service” facility development for active sports. For example, Lake County Forest Preserves has no plans to build much more than primitive trails at its presently undeveloped properties along the Middle Fork, and although Cook County does plan to rehabilitate its Whealan Pool along the North Branch, most of its future site development plans are oriented toward trails and more rustic or nature-oriented recreation opportunities.
- As mentioned in the boating section, a perceived conflict and potential safety problem makes some forest preserve managers hesitant about developing a canoe trail along the North Branch as it flows through golf courses. Similar conflicts and safety problems could also arise in the case of land-based trail development across golf course property. With the multiple recreational benefits that river corridors can provide, some managers are looking for ways to expand the use of single-purpose facilities such as golf courses. In the case of some golf courses, the redesign of

holes and routing of trails may help minimize conflict and safety problems and expand facility use. In other cases, time-of-day, day-of-week, or seasonal zoning may accomplish similar objectives in the sharing of resource use.

- By the same token, some managers saw a need and opportunity to expand the nature and wildlife benefits that golf courses and active use parks currently provide. The Forest Preserve District of Cook County, for example, is looking at ways in which the river edge along their golf course properties can be re-landscaped to enhance wildlife habitat, restore native plant communities, and reduce fertilizer and runoff into the river system. Similarly, municipal park managers are increasingly sensitive to water quality and native plant community issues, and are engaging in some small scale restoration projects in active use parks. Mentioned in the previous section, the Gompers Park Urban Resources Partnership/ChicagoRivers demonstration project is a prime example of a project that is attempting to expand nature-related benefits in the context of active recreational use.

PART V CONCLUSIONS

This chapter examined the supply of recreation and open space opportunities in the Chicago River corridor from three perspectives: who provides them, what they are and where they are located, and how they can be increased in the context of other values and uses. To address these perspectives, we spoke with resource experts representing diverse user and interest groups, and compiled relevant secondary materials from many different sources. The picture resulting from these efforts is very encouraging, yet significant challenges must be faced before many of the plans and proposals described in these pages can be successfully realized.

RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE PROVIDERS

Study findings showed that the Chicago River corridor has a wide range of recreation and open space providers, as well as other landowners and lessees that contribute to its appeal and vitality. Public ownership of corridor lands is significant, and while the metropolitan area has benefited greatly from the foresight of the creators of the county forest preserve districts, perhaps the most significant opportunities for future recreation and open space enhancement can be found on the extensive land holdings of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago. As the MWRD articulates its recently expanded policy of multiple use, particularly with respect to public access on leased properties, broad goals need to be addressed within the constraints and conditions of present land uses at particular sites. Our interviews with industrial land lessees showed significant reservations about public access across property for reasons of cost, safety, and security. These cautions extended to public agency lessees as well in terms of future lease conditions that call for removing fencing and regrading the banks to bring people closer to the river. As leases are renewed under the River Renaissance and North Shore Channel Criteria, the MWRD

should work closely with lessees to ensure an optimal mix of public access with other uses and considerations. Incentives, cost sharing with other units of government and the private sector, technical assistance, and other tools could be used to help implement these forward-looking policies.

Our findings also showed that a significant amount of public lands in the Chicago River corridor are the focus of intensive programs of ecological management and restoration. Public agencies, in cooperation with volunteer restoration and other stewardship groups, are helping make the corridor a model for urban ecosystem management through some of the most innovative programs in the nation. The lessons learned from managing suburban forest preserve properties are being applied in some urban parks and private open spaces, but surely more could be done. For example, restoration projects underway in the City of Chicago at Gompers Park and Beaubien Forest Preserve through the ChicagoRivers/Urban Resource Partnership demonstration projects are steps in this direction. They not only hold tremendous value for enhancing urban open space as functioning ecosystems, but can also provide essential nearby nature experiences for urban residents. Private open space, particularly in the northern headwater sections of the corridor, also plays a critical role in sustaining the overall system in terms of water quality, biological diversity, wildlife habitat, aesthetics, recreation, and other values. Innovative development projects such as the Techny site on the West Fork can be used as models for blending ecological management with private development, as well as for public access and use. Lessons learned from these public and private attempts at ecological management and restoration need to be applied on other public and private sites. In this respect, important opportunities exist for golf courses along the river, which account for significant acreage on the upper forks of the North Branch. Even if open space is not all publicly accessible for active recreational use, it can provide publicly valued ecological roles.

The importance of partnerships established between the public and not-for-profit sectors in accomplishing recreational and open space goals cannot be overstated. As identified in this report, the diverse activities of not-for-profit groups in the corridor range from hands-on land and water management to recreation, preservation, education, and economic development. As federal and state funds for public land acquisition and management programs continue to shrink, local and regional public agencies will no doubt have to rely increasingly on the not-for-profit sector to accomplish activities they once did on their own. Public agencies are fortunate to have a not-for-profit infrastructure already developed that functions in many parts of the corridor, and for agencies that don't, many models exist for transport to new locations. Public agencies can work to help organize constituencies, and regional not-for-profits can help develop local groups to address specific issues and concerns. Both sectors can increase volunteer participation by tailoring involvement activities to better meet the social, recreational, aesthetic, and other values that people seek in activity participation.

Study findings also showed that private sector companies not directly concerned with recreation and open space nonetheless can play an important role in providing corridor recreation and open space opportunities. Excellent models exist in the corridor of private industries who have improved the aesthetics of their riverbank property and some who have worked closely with local units of government to plan for and provide public access across their property for trails and riverwalks. Guidelines formulated for the downtown sections of the Chicago River have made a positive impact, and corresponding guidelines are now being developed for other inland waterways in the city. These guidelines hold the key to future recreation and open space development in the city, as vacant industrial parcels along the South Branch are converted to new uses, and as industrial areas along the North Branch are modernized. Similar opportunities to protect shoreland open space values now exist in the rapidly developing north suburban areas, and the many communities along these reaches can play a key role in guiding private development, from improving landscaping to dedicating riverwalks. As one current example, the Village of Glenview is improving the riverfront in its downtown area and is working with adjacent communities in developing a greenway riverwalk along the West Fork of the North Branch.

RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE OPPORTUNITIES

A major contribution of this study was a fairly comprehensive inventory of recreation and open space opportunities currently available in each reach of the corridor, as well as a sketch of opportunities planned or proposed in the future. The difficulty of assembling such an inventory taught us about the diversity of opportunities that exist, as well as the high level of ongoing activity to increase these opportunities. There is no doubt that inaccuracies exist in the inventory, and even more certainty that it will soon need to be updated. Nevertheless, the result of the effort demonstrates the value of taking a look at the broad spectrum of public and private opportunities across multiple jurisdictions.

The wealth of opportunities currently existing in the corridor include more than 50 miles of bicycle-grade trails, and many more miles of developed trails and footpaths. Plans and ongoing projects will greatly increase mileage, and not only provide connections to all reaches within the corridor but also link it together with greenways throughout the metropolitan region and beyond. Current boating and fishing opportunities are more modest, though as water quality continues to improve in the corridor additional resources will undoubtedly be channeled into further development of these opportunities. Skokie Lagoons on the East Fork and Flatfoot Lake just off the Calumet River are two current examples of restoration projects that will significantly increase boating and fishing opportunities in the corridor. Restoration projects in the river proper pose a different set of challenges, but are no less realizable as goals. Perhaps the least visible but most significant recreation and open space opportunities in the corridor are those we discussed under the heading of natural and cultural resource-based recreation and education.

These activities include a diverse amalgam of opportunities, from birding to hunting to restoration of historic buildings and ecologically significant landscapes. The Chicago River corridor contains some of the most significant opportunities of this kind in the metropolitan region, state, and in some cases, the nation. More importantly, as initiatives such as The Nature Conservancy's biodiversity initiative and the Lake Calumet Ecological Park are implemented, they can become national models of how we can ensure a more harmonious coexistence between people and nature in urban areas.

RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE ISSUES AND CONCERNS

Although plenty of possibilities exist for increasing recreation and open space opportunities in the corridor, care must be taken to integrate them with other corridor values, including economic and environmental values. Most we spoke with showed a high level of enthusiasm for more trails, boating, fishing, and natural and cultural activities, but they were also concerned about user conflicts, limitations in access, safety and security, loss of economic livelihood, and potential damage to land and water resources. These issues and concerns were spelled out in detail by the resource experts, but so were many creative and workable recommendations and solutions for minimizing potential problems. Among such recommendations were informational campaigns to raise public awareness of the resource and responsibility for its protection; technological or environmental modifications to shoreline, land, and water areas that would minimize problems; coalitions of agencies and other groups who might act as "river authorities" to mediate conflicts and resolve issues among various river users; and improved programs of education, management, and regulation. Many of these potential solutions are readily available for implementation; in fact, some are already in place in some reaches of the corridor and only need to be exported elsewhere. As plans and programs aimed at recreation and open space development evolve in the years ahead, we hope that the ideas and recommendations documented here can help deal with the challenge of learning how to use and respect the Chicago River for all its values.

APPENDIX 4.1

INFORMATION SOURCES

INTERVIEWS

(Numbers next to names indicate separate interviews)

PUBLIC LAND MANAGERS

Formal interviews

1. George Kelly, Architect Planner, Environmental Design Section
David H. Bielenberg, Architect Planner, Environmental Design Section
Edward Smetana, Interactive Video Manager, Real Estate Department
Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago
2. David M. Eubanks, Greenway Planner
David Kircher, Chief Landscape Architect
Forest Preserve District of Cook County, Illinois
3. Ralph Thornton, Land Manager
Anthony Ponziano, North Regional Superintendent
Forest Preserve District of Cook County, Illinois
4. William Granberry, South Regional Superintendent
Forest Preserve District of Cook County, Illinois
5. Michael Fenelon, Director of Planning, Conservation, and Development
Lake County Forest Preserves
6. Miriam Gusevitch, Architect, Design Division
Chicago Park District
7. Bob Kushnir, Superintendent, River Park
Chicago Park District
8. Mary Bak, Director of Development
Village of Glenview
9. Don Wirth, Director of Parks and Forestry
City of Evanston
10. Bill Banks, Naturalist, Lake Katherine Nature Center
City of Palos Heights

Informal interviews

11. Steve Pescitelli, Northeastern Illinois Streams Project Manager
Illinois Department of Natural Resources
12. Mike Jones, Fisheries Biologist, Cook County District
Illinois Department of Natural Resources
13. Scott Garrow
William Powers Conservation Area
Illinois Department of Natural Resources
14. Chris Merenowicz, Fish Biologist
Forest Preserve District of Cook County
15. Bob Porter, Superintendent
Lemont Park District

16. Walt Schamber
Lake Bluff Park District

NON-PROFIT GROUPS

Formal Interviews

17. Bill Koenig
Friends of the Chicago River and
Cook County Clean Streams Committee
18. Robert Lonsdorf, Land Steward
North Branch Restoration Project
19. Christine Lee
Audubon Society
20. Susan Urbas, Executive Director
Chicago River Aquatic Center
21. Hal Jensen, Executive Director
Chicago Riverwalk Corp.

Informal interviews

22. Laurel Ross, Director
Volunteer Stewardship Network
The Nature Conservancy
23. Gerald W. Adelman, Executive Director
Openlands Project
24. Emily Harris, Executive Director
Canal Corridor Association

PRIVATE COMMERCIAL RECREATION PROVIDERS

Formal interviews

25. Mike Borgstrom, Vice President
Wendela Boat Tours
26. Ralph Frese, Owner
Vic Hurtowy
Chicagoland Canoe Base, Inc.
27. Mark Berman, Manager
Marina Towers Marina
28. Nick Boudos, Owner
Kathy Agelson
Frank
Windjammer Marina
29. Ron Haskell, General Manager
North Pier Chicago

COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL INTERESTS

Formal Interviews

30. William Cromwell, Planner
CSX Real Property, Inc.

31. William R. Lyon, Real Estate Representative
Tribune Properties, Inc.
Mike Debisch, Site Manager
Tribune Freedom Center
32. R. O. (Rudy) Wulf, Real Estate Manager
Mike, Real Estate Manager
Commonwealth Edison Co.
33. Mark Walbrun, Director Capital Projects
Kurt Weissheimer, Managing Director of Real Estate
Chicago Union Station Company
34. Todd Hudson and other members
Illinois River Carriers Association
35. Michael Gotkin, General Counsel
Farley Candy Co.

Informal interview

36. Charles Finkl, President
A. Finkl and Sons
Chicago, IL

MISCELLANEOUS

Formal interview

37. Peter Schurla, Deputy Chief
Special Functions Group
Lt. Earl Zuelke, Commanding Officer
Marine Unit – Special Functions Division
Chicago Police Department

Informal interview

38. John Husar, Outdoor Writer
Chicago Tribune

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APPENDIX 4.2

DISCUSSION GUIDES FOR RESOURCE EXPERT INTERVIEWS

OUTLINE OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PUBLIC LAND MANAGERS

Introductory comments:

1. *Model Urban Rivers Project—NPS/FOCR project: Assessment & Plan*
2. *USFS assessment of recreation user and interest group perceptions*
3. *“Chicago River Corridor” explanation and show on map—concerned with your parcels*
4. *Interview format is informal and open-ended (1-1½ hours); besides some general background questions will cover 3 major areas:*
 - *Agency ownership & management of lands along the river*
 - *recreation use of the river and river corridor on your lands*
 - *Your constituency groups and their images and perceptions of the river*
5. *Will record and take notes so we don’t miss anything*

A. General Introductory Questions

“First we’d like to get a little information about you and your position with the district...”

1. Position/title in the district? (*include name(s) of those interviewed*)
2. Number of years with the district?
3. Job duties now and over time? (*Ask about familiarity with specific lands owned by district*)

B. Ownership and Management

“In this first set of questions we want to focus on **ownership and management of district lands** to get an idea of the character of the lands owned by the district and how they are managed for various purposes.”

1. First, what section(s) of the river(s) are within your jurisdiction? (Use map and if possible obtain detailed map showing holdings).
 - a. Total acreage and/or number of river miles?
 - b. Contiguity of parcels? (scattered, consolidated)
2. Does your district have any policies or plans for increasing ownership/holdings along the river?
 - a. No/Yes —> If yes, When? Where? How?
3. “Next, we’d like to get an idea about the character of properties owned along the river corridor and the policies and programs for managing the river corridor.”

- a. First, how would you describe the **overall character of the river corridor** and the district’s philosophy for managing it (e.g., let-it-be, active management)? (*If appropriate, ask about the district’s mission and how river management policies are in keeping with that mission...*)
- b. How important of a role do the river corridors play in the district’s land holdings **overall**?
- c. What about the **immediate shoreline** area (river banks)? Can you describe the...
 - physical character? (e.g., steep sloped)
 - vegetation and how it’s managed? (e.g. upland woods, open areas, marshy)
 - what about management of the shoreline for various use objectives? Are things done to...
 - facilitate or discourage recreation (e.g., canoe access, fishing piers)?
 - enhance wildlife habitat?
- d. What about the **adjacent corridor** area (up to ¼ mile or so from the shoreline)? Can you describe the...
 - physical character? (upland, floodplain)
 - vegetation (natural communities and developed/mowed areas for recreation)
- e. What about the **river itself**? Can you describe...
 - its width, flow (seasonal change), and navigability?
 - management of in-stream materials? (e.g. are hanging branches for habitat or navigation obstructions?)
 - water quality?
- f. What about **adjacent land uses** including nearby roads and bridge crossings?
- g. What about any **in-stream (non-recreational) use** (e.g., barge traffic)?
 - how do these uses affect your ability to manage river for other management goals?

C. Actual Recreation Use of the River and River Corridor

“Our next set of questions aims at issues regarding actual recreation use of the river and river corridor..”

1. First, how important of a role do the river corridors play in the recreational use of the district’s land holdings **overall**? If possible, can you estimate the percent of total recreational use that is river oriented—either directly (e.g., fishing, boating) or indirectly (e.g., viewing, walking or sitting along)?

2. What about **direct uses** of the river, such as fishing and boating—(*Probe for important use areas, popular spots or features, estimates of numbers of users for activity/location. Also, get idea of change over the years...*)
 - a. Fishing—locations/facilities?
 - b. Canoeing/boating—locations/facilities?
3. What about **indirect uses** of the river corridor, such as biking, hiking, and nature activities—(*Probe for important use areas, popular spots or features, use levels for activity/location, changes over the years...*)
 - a. Paved trails—biking and walking?
 - b. Unpaved trails—hiking and mountain biking?
 - c. Nature observation—e.g., birdwatching/photography?
 - d. Other (e.g., nut and seed collecting)?
4. One relationship we'd like to get a better feel for is how management of the vegetation in the river corridor affects its recreational use. Thinking broadly about the mix of land uses in the corridor, can you characterize the type and numbers of users in the following areas...
 - a. Natural (wooded) areas—who uses them, how many, for what?
 - b. Mowed areas—who uses them, how many, for what?
 - c. Developed facilities (buildings, paved areas)—who uses them, how many, for what?
5. What kinds of information/programs/etc. does the district have that relate to the river (ask for specific examples)?
6. Does the district sponsor any river recreation activities or work with user groups (e.g., canoe trips)?
7. What are the prospects or district policies for increasing recreational use?
 - a. How does the district view the idea of increased recreational use? (specific activities)
 - b. Are changes (managerial, financial, environmental) needed to accommodate increased recreational use of the river and corridor?

D. People's Images and Perceptions of the River

"Our final set of questions focuses on the topic of people's images and perceptions of the river corridor on your district's lands...."

1. First, who do you feel your **major constituent groups** are? Who do you serve, both recreational and nonrecreational interests?

2. One major group we'd like to know about is **recreational visitors**. How do you think recreationists perceive the river in your holdings? (*Ask first generally, then probe for these specific dimensions...*)
 - a. **Aesthetics**— (*Probe for both positive (e.g., nature) and negative (e.g., odors) aspects; if possible, name specific locations, features, etc.*)
 - b. **Safety** (*probe for physical safety (e.g., drownings, water quality) and personal safety (e.g., crime, gangs, cults) aspects. If possible, name specific locations, features, etc.*)
 - c. As a **recreational resource**—
 - (1) direct (fishing, boating) and
 - (2) indirect (viewing, walking along, biking along)
 Do you think recreational visitors who use the trails see the river as a primary aesthetic feature? Do you think some are not even aware the river is there?
 - d. **Wildlife habitat**
 - e. **Water quality**
3. A second major interest group includes **adjacent landowners**. How do you think adjacent landowners perceive the river in your holdings? (*Ask first generally, then probe for these specific dimensions...*)
 - a. **Aesthetics** (*again, positive and negative aspects*)
 - b. **Safety** (*again, physical and personal safety, perceived vs. actual*)
 - c. As a **recreational resource**—how good is access from the neighborhoods?
 - (1) direct (fishing, boating) and
 - (2) indirect (viewing, walking along, biking along)
 - d. **Wildlife habitat and vegetation** (*positive and negative—deer invading yard and eating vegetation*)
 - e. **Water quality**
4. How do you think _____ (**name of other constituent group**) perceive the river in your holdings? (*Ask first generally, then probe for these specific dimensions as appropriate...*)
 - a. **Aesthetics** (*again, positive and negative aspects*)
 - b. **Safety** (*again, physical and personal safety, perceived vs. actual*)
 - c. As a **recreational resource**
 - (1) direct
 - (2) indirect
 - d. **Wildlife habitat and vegetation** (*positive and negative*)
 - e. **Water quality**

OUTLINE OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PRIVATE NOT-FOR-PROFIT GROUPS

Introductory comments:

1. *Model Urban Rivers Project—NPS/FOCR projects: Assessment & plan*
2. *USFS assessment of recreation use and interest group perceptions*
3. *“Chicago River Corridor” explanation and show on map*
4. *Interview format is informal and open-ended (1 hour or so); besides some general background areas, we will cover three topics:*
 - a. *Group and member/clientele profile*
 - b. *How members/clientele think about and use the river corridor*
 - c. *River corridor enhancement for recreation and other values*
5. *We will record and take notes so that we don't miss anything.*

A. General Introductory Questions

“Before we begin the interview we'd like to get a little information about you and your group (or, confirm that the information we have is correct)”:

1. Name of group, years in existence.
2. Your title/position, number of years, have duties changed over time (if you are not the director, who directs the group)?

B. Group and Member Profile

“In this first section, we are interested in what your group does and who your members and/or clientele are.”

1. What is your group's purpose and how do you accomplish it (generally, and with respect to the Chicago River corridor)?
 - mission
 - programs
 - policies and guidelines
 - planning activities
 - partnerships/cooperation with public agencies, private groups
2. Has your focus with respect to the Chicago River changed in recent years?
3. Who are your members and/or clientele? Where do they come from? (Probe for specifics—e.g., demographic profile)

C. Perceptions and Use of the River Corridor

“In this section, we're interested in your thoughts and experience of how your members and/or clientele perceive and use the river and the corridor.”

1. What activities are your members and/or clientele involved in with respect to the river? What benefits do they get from being affiliated with your group (e.g., access to areas and activities, personal benefits, etc.)?
2. What areas of the corridor most concern your group? What is your knowledge of and level of involvement with these areas? What areas or places do you use or manage?
3. What do your members and/or clientele think about the river? What do they like or dislike about the river? What kinds of changes have they noticed?
 - water quality
 - cultural & historic features
 - natural areas
 - safety—
 - personal
 - physical
 - obstructions
 - user conflicts
4. Has the character of the river and its corridor changed over the past 5-10 years? How? (Probe: water quality, vegetation, etc.)
5. What about the “general public”? Do you think that their perception of the river corridor is different from your members/clientele?

D. River Corridor Enhancement for Recreation and Other Values

“In this section, we are interested in your thoughts about improving the river corridor for recreation and other values your group is interested in.

1. Would your group favor increased recreational use of the river corridor? Why (or why not)? What kinds of activities?
2. What improvements do you think are most needed to enhance the river corridor for recreation? Other values your group is interested in?
3. How do you think these changes should come about—public sector initiatives, private sector investments, partnerships? What would/could *your group's* role be in bringing about these changes? (Probe for changes in policy, laws, or management)?
4. Do you see increased user conflicts with increased recreational use? Would these user conflicts be a problem? How could they be prevented or minimized?
5. Do you think that your members and/or clientele would like or dislike increased recreational use of the river (crowding)?

E. Conclusion

Are there other people you recommend that we talk to?

Thanks for your time!

OUTLINE OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR COMMERCIAL RECREATION PROVIDERS

Introductory comments:

1. *Model Urban Rivers Project—NPS/FOCR projects: Assessment & plan*
2. *USFS assessment of recreation use and interest group perceptions*
3. *“Chicago River Corridor” explanation and show on map—where are they on the map?*
4. *Interview format is informal and open-ended (1 hour or so); besides some general background areas, we will cover three topics:*
 - a. *recreation services provided*
 - b. *how people think about and use the river corridor*
 - c. *increased recreational use of the river corridor*
5. *We will record and take notes so that we don't miss anything.*

A. General Introductory Questions

“Before we begin the interview we'd like to get a little information about you and your business (or, confirm that the information we have is correct)”:

1. Name of company, years in business.
2. Your title/position, number of years, have duties changed over time? (if you are not the owner, who owns the business?)
3. Do you own the land where your facility is located, or do you rent? If you rent, who is the owner and what is the lease arrangement?

B. Services Provided and Customer Profile

“In this first section, we are interested in what services your business provides to river users and the level of interest in these services over time.”

1. What recreational services do you offer?

rental	sales	mooring
service	lessons	other
2. How many canoeists/boaters are there interested in boating the river? Is this a large market (boaters/week-end day)? How many boaters do you have *here* (per weekend day)? What percentage simply use the river as access to the Lake?
3. Has your level of business changed in the past year? Five years?
4. Do you anticipate increased use in the near future? Decreased?
5. Who are your customers? Where do they come from? (Probe for specifics—e.g., demographic profile)
6. What other river-related recreational activities do your customers pursue while boating (e.g., fishing, photography, birdwatching)?
7. Are there other corridor-related features that bring your customers to your marina (e.g., forest preserve, trails)?

8. Do you do anything to manage the river or its corridor (e.g., your landing areas) to enhance recreation opportunities (e.g., cut brush, dredge, plant trees).

C. Perceptions and Use of the River Corridor

“In this section, we're interested in your thoughts and experience of how people perceive and use the river and the corridor.”

1. Has the character of the river and its corridor changed over the past 5-10 years? How? (Probe: water quality, vegetation, etc.)
2. What do your customers think about the river? What do they like or dislike about the river? What kinds of changes have they noticed?
 - water quality
 - cultural & historic features
 - natural areas
 - safety:
 - personal (crime, gangs, etc.)
 - physical (drowning, water quality)
 - obstructions (trees, dams, garbage)
 - user conflicts (other boaters, commercial traffic, anglers)
3. What about the “general public”? Do you think that their perception of the river corridor is different from your customers?
4. Where do your customers go along the river (indicate on map)? What spots are favorite? Why are they favorite (Probe: good fishing, wildlife, aesthetics [what is appealing?])?
5. Where *can* they go? (in terms of physical barriers/obstructions, safety, etc.)
6. Are there specific places where your customers cannot go now, but they would like to?

D. River Corridor Enhancement for Recreation

“In this section, we are interested in your thoughts about improving the river corridor for recreation—we are interested in all kinds of recreational activities, not just boating.”

1. Would you favor increased recreational use of the river corridor? Why (or why not)? What kinds of activities?
2. What improvements do you think are most needed to enhance the river corridor for recreation?
3. How do you think these changes should come about—public sector initiatives, private sector investments, partnerships? What would/could *your* role be in bringing about these changes? (Probe for changes in policy, laws, or management)?
4. Do you see increased user conflicts with increased recreational use? Would these user conflicts be a problem? How could they be prevented or minimized?
5. Do you think that your customers would like or dislike increased recreational use of the river (crowding)?

E. Conclusion

Are there other people you recommend that we talk to?

Thanks for your time!

OUTLINE OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR MANAGERS OF COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL PROPERTIES ALONG THE CORRIDOR

Introductory Comments:

1. *Model Urban Rivers Project—NPS/FOCR projects: Assessment & plan*
2. *USFS assessment of recreation use and interest group perceptions*
3. *“Chicago River Corridor” explain and show on map—where are they on the map?*
4. *Interview format is informal and open-ended (1 hour or less); besides some general background areas, we will cover three topics:*
 - a. *our company’s use of the river*
 - b. *how people think about and use the river corridor in your area, including public access*
 - c. *increased recreational use of the river corridor*
5. *We will record and take notes so that we don’t miss anything.*

A. General questions about your company...

“Initially, we’d like to get a little information about you and your business (or, to confirm that the information we have is correct)”:

1. Name of company, number of years in business
2. Nature of business
3. Your title, position, number of years, duties over time
4. Location(s) along the river corridor
5. Do you own the land where your facility is located (on the river)? If not, from whom do you lease? What are the terms (length of lease, stipulations on type of use, access)?

B. Company Perceptions and Use of the River & Corridor

1. How does your company use the river & corridor?

Direct use—e.g., barge deliveries? Is the river essential to your business (e.g., switching to truck/train deliveries too expensive, use water for cooling, etc.) ?

Indirect use—e.g., lunchroom faces the river?
2. How has your company’s use of the river changed? Past use? Historic use in this area? Prospects for future use?
3. How does your company manage the shore area (landscaping, fencing, lighting, security patrol)? Does the building or facility incorporate the river (face it, etc.), or not?
4. What is the impact of water quality on your use of the river?

C. Public Use and Access to River & Corridor

1. Is there public access to the river at your site? Does the company view public access positively or negatively?
2. Is there public access at your shore area from people coming for up or down stream?
3. What recreational use is made of the river near your facility (*instream*: canoeing, fishing, motor boats; *shoreside*: riverwalks, etc.)? How does your company view this use? Problems, opportunities?

D. River Corridor Enhancement for Recreational Use

These next questions are about opportunities for recreational use of the river in general, and are not limited to the river at your site:

1. Do you see opportunities for increased recreational use of the river? *Shoreside? In-stream?*
2. Do you have concerns about increased recreational use?

These next questions are more directly concerned with increased recreational use of the river in your facility’s area:

3. What problems or opportunities might there be with increased recreational use of the river in your facility’s area? If you see problems with increased usage, how close can this use be before it interferes with your business?
4. Are there changes that could be made (managerial, legal, etc.) that would change your view of the opportunities/constraints with respect to public access to the river and/or increased recreational usage?
5. FOR MWRD LESSEES: What are your company’s thoughts on policies like the MWRD River Edge Renaissance? If a policy like this were applied to your river property, what would the impact be for your company? Would your company view these changes positively or negatively?

NOTES

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