Illinois Rivers and Lakes Fact Sheets

Much of the following information was obtained from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA), particularly from *Fact Sheets* and *Illinois Water Quality Reports.*

The IEPA's water quality program is designed to protect the beneficial uses or "designated uses" of the water resources of Illinois. In designing uses for a water body, a state takes into consideration the use and value of the water body for public water supply; for propagation of fish, shellfish and wildlife; and for recreational, agricultural, industrial and navigational purposes. A "good" rating means a river or lake meets the needs of all designated uses. "Fair" means water quality has been impaired, and the water body meets the needs of a designated use most of the time. A water body that is rated as "poor" has water quality that has been severely impaired and cannot support a designated use to any degree.

IEPA Fact Sheets are updated every other year. For more recent data, contact the IEPA at P.O. Box 19276, 1001 North Grand Ave. East, Springfield, IL 62794-9276 (217/782-3362).

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BIG MUDDY RIVER

LENGTH -- approximately 166 miles
DRAINAGE -- 1,500,100 acres in Washington, Jefferson, Perry, Franklin, Jackson and Williamson counties
TRIBUTARIES/LAKES/CITIES --Major tributaries in the basin include Casey Fork, the Middle Fork Big Muddy and Little Muddy Rivers and Crab Orchard and Beaucoup Creeks. The basin also includes Rend Lake, Crab Orchard Lake and Kinkaid Lake as well as the cities of Mt. Vernon, Benton, West Frankfort, Marion, Herrin, Du Quoin, Carbondale and Murphysboro.
WATER QUALITY -- IEPA (1995) assessed 113.9 stream miles on the river. Of the areas tested, 0.7 miles were rated "good" and 113. 2 stream miles were "fair."
POLLUTANTS -- Sources include agricultural practices, mining and municipalities.
OTHER FACTS -- The Big Muddy River joins the Mississippi River at river mile 76.

CACHE RIVER BASIN

LENGTH -- 57.4 miles in the Ohio River basin; 35.9 miles in the Mississippi River basin
DRAINAGE -- 614,100 acres in Union, Johnson, Alexander, Pulaski and Massac counties
TRIBUTARIES/LAKES/CITIES -- Major streams in this basin include Cache River, Cypress Creek, Main Ditch and Dutchman Creek. The largest cities in the basin are Metropolis and Vienna.
WATER QUALITY -- All 29.9 stream miles assessed on the Lower Cache (IEPA 1995) were rated "fair." All of the 44.6 stream miles assessed on the Upper Cache River were rated as "fair."
POLLUTANTS -- Causes include nutrients, siltation, other habitat alterations and suspended solids attributed to agricultural runoff and hydrologic/habitat modification, urban runoff and point sources.
OTHER FACTS -- Human-made channels, diversions and levees have divided the former Cache watershed into two watersheds, which drain into the Mississippi River and the Ohio River, respectively. The northern, east-central and southeast portions of the Upper Cache River watershed drain into the Ohio River via Post Creek Cutoff, a human-made diversion channel. The west-central and southwest portions of the Lower Cache River watershed drain to the Mississippi River via a one mile long diversion channel. Sedimentation is severe in many of the lowland stream reaches.

CARLYLE LAKE

LOCATION -- located in Clinton, Bond and Fayette counties; managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
SIZE/DEPTH -- -surface area = 24,580 acres; the largest inland lake in Illinois; average depth = 11 feet; maximum depth = 38 feet
WATERSHED -- 1,738,880 acres
FORMED -- Created in 1966 by damming the Kaskaskia River.
USES -- mainly for public water supplies and recreation
WATER QUALITY -- Overall water quality is "fair" (IEPA 1995).
POLLUTANTS -- Causes include nutrients, suspended solids, siltation, noxious aquatic plants and organic enrichment (low dissolved oxygen). Sources include agriculture, shoreline erosion, recreational activities and municipal point sources.
CLASSIFICATION -- eutrophic

CLINTON LAKE

LOCATION -- De Witt County; owned by Illinois Power Company; managed by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources
SIZE/DEPTH -- surface area = 4,895 acres; average depth = 15.6 feet; maximum depth = 45 feet
WATERSHED -- 189,440 acres
FORMED -- Created in 1977 by damming Salt Creek.
USES -- recreation, public water supply and as a source of cooling water for the power plant
WATER QUALITY -- Water quality is considered "fair" (IEPA 1995).
POLLUTANTS -- Pollutant sources are agriculture, urban runoff/storm sewers and shoreline erosion. Major pollutants include nutrients, siltation and suspended solids.
CLASSIFICATION -- eutrophic

CRAB ORCHARD LAKE

LOCATION -- Williamson County; managed by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
SIZE/DEPTH -- surface area = 6,965 acres; fourth largest inland lake in Illinois; average depth = 9.1 feet; maximum depth = 25 feet
WATERSHED -- 109,261 acres
FORMED -- Constructed in 1941 by damming the middle reaches of Crab Orchard Creek.
USES -- public water supply and for recreation
WATER QUALITY -- The overall water quality is "fair" (IEPA 1995).
POLLUTANTS -- Pollution causes include siltation, suspended solids and organic enrichment (low dissolved oxygen) with sources including agriculture, urban runoff/storm sewers, shoreline erosion, waterfowl and municipal point sources.
CLASSIFICATION -- eutrophic

DES PLAINES RIVER

LENGTH -- 156 miles
DRAINAGE -- 874,000 acres
TRIBUTARIES/LAKES/CITIES -- Mill Creek and Hickory Creek are the major tributaries. The greater Chicago metropolitan area is in this river basin.
WATER QUALITY -- Most of the river was rated as having "fair" overall resource quality in an IEPA 1995 report. All "good" stream segments and most "fair" stream segments were found in Lake County.
POLLUTANTS -- Degraded water conditions were primarily due to urban surface runoff, municipal and industrial discharges and to some extent channelization and flow regulation.
OTHER FACTS -- The majority of the watershed is in the greater Chicago metropolitan area and has been extensively developed for urban and industrial use. Rural and agricultural lands along the river are primarily in Lake and Will counties.

DEVIL'S KITCHEN LAKE

LOCATION -- Williamson County; managed by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
SIZE/DEPTH -- surface area = 810 acres; maximum depth = 90 feet; average depth = 36 feet
WATERSHED -- 11,700 acres
FORMED -- Created in 1959 by damming Grassy Creek.
USES -- mainly recreation
WATER QUALITY -- An IEPA 1995 report showed overall water quality is "good."
POLLUTANTS -- There are no current causes or sources of pollution identified as impacting Devil's Kitchen Lake.
CLASSIFICATION -- mesotrophic; one of the highest quality inland lakes in Illinois

EMBARRAS RIVER

LENGTH -- 220 miles
DRAINAGE -- about 1,561,600 acres in portions of 10 counties
TRIBUTARIES/LAKES/CITIES -- The North Fork Embarras River is the only major tributary. Largest cities in the basin are Charleston, Lawrenceville and Mattoon, while Lake Charleston is the only major impoundment.
WATER QUALITY -- Of the 173.8 stream miles assessed by the IEPA (1995), 13.2 were rated "good" and 160.6 stream miles were rated "fair."
POLLUTANTS -- Causes of pollution include nutrients, siltation, organic enrichment/dissolved oxygen depletion and other habitat alterations attributed to agricultural runoff, oil field-related runoff and channelization.
OTHER FACTS -- A 100-mile stretch of the midsection of the Embarras River is designated as a Biologically Significant Stream. The extensive sand-and-gravel bottom of this section of the river provides habitat for a number of rare fish species like the harlequin darter, eastern sand darter, bigeye shiner and blue sucker. Mussel diversity is high in this river and several threatened or endangered species live here.

FOX CHAIN O'LAKES

LOCATION -- Lake County
SIZE/DEPTH -- Eleven lakes range in size from 45 acres (Redhead Lake) to 1,709 acres (Fox Lake). Includes Bluff, Catherine, Channel, Fox, Grass, Marie, Nippersink, Petite and Pistakee lakes, their islands, interconnecting channels and the Fox River to Algonquin. Fox Lake's average depth is 5.6 feet with a maximum depth of 14 feet.
WATERSHED -- 766,146 acres including land in Illinois and Wisconsin
FORMED -- by glaciers; impounded in 1939 as part of a Civilian Conservation Corps project to increase water depth and recreational opportunities
USES -- heavy recreational use since the late 1800s when many Chicago residents began using them for summer and weekend outings; flood control
WATER QUALITY -- According to an IEPA 1995 report, overall resource quality is "good" for four of the lakes and "fair" for five lakes. Two of the lakes have not been monitored.
POLLUTANTS -- Pollution causes include nutrients, siltation, suspended solids and noxious aquatic plants. Pollution sources include agriculture, construction, urban runoff, land disposal and recreation.
CLASSIFICATION -- hypereutrophic

FOX RIVER

LENGTH -- 115 miles
DRAINAGE -- 601,600 acres in Illinois and Wisconsin
TRIBUTARIES/LAKES/CITIES -- Tributaries include Nippersink Creek and Somonauk Creek. The major population centers are Elgin and Aurora.
WATER QUALITY -- Of the 41.4 stream miles assessed on the upper Fox River by the IEPA (1995), 35.3 were rated "good" and 6.1 were rated "fair." On the lower Fox River, of 71.2 stream miles assessed 60.6 were rated as "good" and the rest were "fair."
POLLUTANTS -- Major problems on the upper Fox River include siltation and organic enrichment from municipal point sources, urban runoff, septic tanks and in-place contaminants. Major problems on the lower Fox River were mainly due to habitat alterations and added nutrients.
OTHER FACTS -- The majority of the watershed is used for agriculture and expansion of urban areas.

HORSESHOE LAKE

LOCATION -- Alexander County; managed by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources
SIZE/DEPTH -- surface area = 1,890 acres; maximum depth = 4.9 feet; average depth = 3.0 feet
WATERSHED -- 15,177 acres
FORMED -- The lake was formed as an oxbow of the Mississippi River. In 1929, the lake was excavated and Black Creek was dammed to deepen the oxbow thereby creating expanded recreational opportunities.
USES -- recreation
WATER QUALITY -- The overall water quality is rated "fair" by the IEPA (1995).
POLLUTANTS -- Causes of pollution are nutrients, siltation, suspended solids, organic enrichment (low dissolved oxygen) and noxious aquatic plants. Sources of pollution include agricultural runoff and nutrient contributions from waterfowl wastes.
CLASSIFICATION -- The flood of 1993 inundated the lake and caused excessive damage due to siltation. The lake is classified as hypereutrophic.

ILLINOIS RIVER

LENGTH -- 332 miles
DRAINAGE -- 18,566,400 acres including land in Illinois, Wisconsin and Indiana
TRIBUTARIES/LAKES/CITIES -- Major tributaries include the Des Plaines, Fox, Kankakee, Vermilion, Mackinaw, Sangamon, Spoon and La Moine rivers. Major cities include La Salle, Peru, Ottawa, Peoria, Pekin and East Peoria.
WATER QUALITY -- The IEPA (1995) rated water quality on all stream miles tested as "fair."
POLLUTANTS -- Primary problems on the upper Illinois are metals; nutrients, siltation and suspended solids attributed to agriculture; hydrologic/habitat alterations and contaminated sediments. Major problems on the middle Illinois are: siltation; nutrients and suspended solids attributed to agriculture; point sources; and hydrologic/habitat modifications. Primary problems on the lower Illinois are: nutrients; siltation and flow alteration attributed to agriculture; hydrologic/habitat modifications; and point sources.
OTHER FACTS -- This river is divided into navigation reaches by a series of locks and dams. The river banks are lined with lakes and backwaters. Natural sedimentation processes have been altered and accelerated by human activities such as agriculture, levee building and urbanization. 13.8 million tons of sediment are delivered to the Illinois River annually. The average annual outflow of sediment from the Illinois River at Valley City is 5.6 million tons. On average, 8.2 million tons of sediment are delivered from streams and deposited in the Illinois River valley.

KASKASKIA RIVER

LENGTH -- 292 miles
DRAINAGE -- 3,712,640 acres in parts of 17 counties
TRIBUTARIES/LAKES/CITIES -- Tributaries are the Okaw River, Beck's Creek, Wolf Creek, the East Fork of the Kaskaskia River, Crooked Creek, Shoal Creek and Silver Creek. The flow of the Kaskaskia River is interrupted by two major impoundments: Lake Shelbyville and Lake Carlyle. Largest cities in the basin are Champaign, Belleville and Centralia.
WATER QUALITY -- In the upper basin, 94.3 miles of the Kaskaskia River were sampled by the IEPA (1995) of which 76.7 were "good" and 17.6 stream miles were "fair." In the middle basin, 62.6 stream miles of the river were tested with 49.9 rated "good" and 12.7 rated "fair." Of the 58.2 stream miles of the lower part of the river included in the survey, 2.5 were rated as "good" and 55.7 stream miles were rated as "fair."
POLLUTANTS -- In the upper basin, priority organics, metals, nutrients and siltation were the primary cause of pollution due to the effects of urban runoff, agricultural runoff and point sources. Numerous contaminants were detected in fish flesh and sediments from the river in the upper basin including chlordane, dieldrin and heptachlor epoxide. In the middle basin, nutrients and siltation were the primary causes of pollution due to the effects of agricultural runoff. In the lower basin, nutrients, siltation, flow alteration, other habitat modifications, priority organics and metals attributed to agriculture and hydrologic/habitat modification were the causes of pollution.
OTHER FACTS -- Major land uses in the basin are cropland, woodland, pasture and urban areas. A lock and dam near the mouth of the Kaskaskia River maintains a pool which extends about 13 miles upstream. The lower 36 miles of this river have been channelized for navigation.

LAKE DECATUR

LOCATION -- Macon County; owned and managed by the City of Decatur
SIZE/DEPTH -- surface area = 3,093 acres; average depth = 7.2 feet; maximum depth = 20 feet
WATERSHED -- 597,497 acres
FORMED -- Created in 1922 by damming the Sangamon River.
USES -- public water supply and recreation
WATER QUALITY -- IEPA (1995) reports that water quality is "fair."
POLLUTANTS -- Major causes of pollution include nutrients, siltation, suspended solids and organic enrichment (low dissolved oxygen). Sources of pollution are agriculture, urban runoff, municipal and industrial point sources and shoreline erosion.
CLASSIFICATION -- eutrophic

LAKE MICHIGAN

LOCATION -- bordered by Lake and Cook counties
SIZE/DEPTH -- third largest Great Lake; sixth largest freshwater lake in the world; 63 Illinois shoreline miles (976,640 acres).
WATERSHED -- The southern portion of the Lake Michigan watershed is heavily populated with intensive industrial development and rich agricultural areas along the shore. The lake receives water from 48,384 acres of Illinois land.
FORMED -- Wisconsinian glacier
USES -- The water taken from the lake is used for residential, commercial and institutional facilities; agricultural operations; industrial processes; electric power generation; navigation; sanitation; recreation; and habitat for fish, waterfowl and other aquatic organisms. Lake Michigan is the source for about 1.1 billion gallons of water per day. It is the drinking water supply for 5 million people in Illinois. Iron ore, coal, limestone, steel, grain and farm products are shipped through Lake Michigan ports. Commercial fishing occurs in the lake for yellow perch, whitefish, bloater chubs, rainbow smelt and alewives. Sportfishing is mainly for salmon (chinook, coho and pink), steelhead (rainbow) trout, yellow perch, lake trout and brown trout. Mining for sand, gravel, limestone and dolomite occurs in Lake Michigan. Recreational activities include fishing, diving, boating and park visitation. The world's largest freshwater dunes line the lakeshore. Millions of people annually visit the dunes/beaches at state and national parks and lake shores around Lake Michigan.
WATER QUALITY -- Water quality is monitored through a cooperative agreement between IEPA and the City of Chicago.
POLLUTANTS -- Pollutants include byproducts of industry, urban runoff and agricultural runoff. Air pollutants from industries and combustion of fossil fuels are also a pollution source as they are deposited from the atmosphere into the lake.
CLASSIFICATION -- oligotrophic

LAKE SHELBYVILLE

LOCATION -- Shelby and Moultrie counties; managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
SIZE/DEPTH -- surface area = 11,000 acres; third largest inland lake in Illinois; average depth = 16.5 feet; maximum depth = 67 feet
WATERSHED -- 659,200 acres
FORMED -- 1971 by damming the Kaskaskia River
USES -- recreation
WATER QUALITY -- IEPA (1995) testing shows overall "good" water quality.
POLLUTANTS -- Causes of pollution include nutrients, siltation, suspended solids and organic enrichment (low dissolved oxygen). Sources of pollution are agriculture, shoreline erosion, recreational activities and municipal point sources.
CLASSIFICATION -- eutrophic

LITTLE WABASH RIVER

LENGTH -- 237 miles
DRAINAGE -- 2,124,800 acres
TRIBUTARIES/LAKES/CITIES -- Tributaries include Big Muddy Creek, Elm River and Skillet Fork. Lake Mattoon is located in the path of the Little Wabash River. Major cities include Mattoon and Effingham.
WATER QUALITY -- Of 182.5 stream miles assessed (IEPA 1995), 21.1 miles were "good" and 161.4 were "fair."
POLLUTANTS -- Causes of pollution were nutrients, siltation, flow alteration, oil and grease attributed to agricultural runoff, hydrologic/habitat modification, urban runoff and resource extraction.
OTHER FACTS -- The southern portion of Illinois was the first to be settled by Europeans. Towns, such as Carmi, were built along the river to provide easy access to trade goods. Flatboats were used to transport the agricultural products raised in the region to larger cities downstream.

MISSISSIPPI RIVER

LENGTH -- 581 miles as an Illinois border
DRAINAGE -- over 30,000,000 acres in Illinois (which includes small areas in Wisconsin and Indiana)
TRIBUTARIES/LAKES/CITIES -- Major tributaries from Illinois include these rivers: Galena; Apple; Rock; Edwards; Illinois; Kaskaskia; and Big Muddy. Major Illinois cities along the river are Moline, East Moline, Rock Island, Quincy, Alton, East St. Louis and Cahokia.
WATER QUALITY -- All stream miles of the river assessed were rated "fair" (IEPA 1995).
POLLUTANTS -- Causes of pollution include nutrients, siltation, flow alteration and other habitat alterations attributed to agriculture and hydrologic/habitat modifications, metals, municipal and industrial discharges, suspended solids attributed to agriculture, urban runoff and point sources.
OTHER FACTS -- The Mississippi River is the largest river in the United States, carrying about 40 percent of all the nation's rainfall to the sea. It discharges about 620,000 cubic feet per second into the Gulf of Mexico.

OHIO RIVER

LENGTH -- composes 133 miles of Illinois' border
DRAINAGE -- 7,079,680 acres in Illinois
TRIBUTARIES/LAKES/CITIES -- Tributaries along the Illinois border include the Wabash and Saline rivers. Cities along the Illinois stretch of the river include Rosiclare, Golconda, Brookport, Metropolis and Cairo.
WATER QUALITY -- The states of Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia, Kentucky, Indiana and Illinois have assigned the responsibility for assessing Ohio River water quality conditions to the Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission (ORSANCO).
POLLUTANTS -- Causes of pollution include nutrients, siltation, flow alteration and habitat modification due to agriculture, hydrologic/habitat modifications, municipal and industrial discharges, suspended solids, urban runoff and point sources.
OTHER FACTS -- The Ohio River was important in the settlement of Illinois by Europeans. In 1818, when Illinois became a state, nearly the entire population of the state was in southern Illinois. Gallatin County, with 3,200 settlers, was the most populous area in the eastern part of the state. Shawneetown, which was first settled in 1806 and resettled in 1809, was the first permanent community and chief river port in eastern Illinois. Due to the salt springs found 12 miles inland, in 1809 Shawneetown had more business activity than any place west of Pittsburgh.

REND LAKE

LOCATION - Franklin and Jefferson counties; managed by the United States Army Corps of Engineers
SIZE/DEPTH -- 24,000 acre reservoir; maximum depth = 40 feet; average depth = 9 feet
WATERSHED -- 320,000 acres
FORMED -- Constructed in 1969-70 by damming the Big Muddy River.
USES -- flood control, water quality control, water supplies, area redevelopment, recreation and fish and wildlife conservation
WATER QUALITY -- IEPA (1995) reports that water quality is "good."
POLLUTANTS -- Major pollutants are nutrients, siltation, organic enrichment (low dissolved oxygen) and suspended solids. Sources of pollutants include agriculture, shoreline erosion, recreational activities and municipal point sources.
CLASSIFICATION -- eutrophic

ROCK RIVER

LENGTH -- 163 miles in Illinois
DRAINAGE -- 2,272,000 acres in Illinois
TRIBUTARIES/LAKES/CITIES -- The Rock River receives the drainage of three major streams: the Pecatonica River; the Kishwaukee River; and the Green River. Major urban areas in the watershed include Rockford, Moline, Rock Island, DeKalb, Sterling, Rock Falls, Freeport, Dixon and Belvidere.
WATER QUALITY -- Of total river miles in this basin, 69 stream miles have "good" overall resource quality and 97.9 stream miles have "fair" quality (IEPA 1995).
POLLUTANTS -- Nutrients, phosphorus in particular, suspended solids and channel modifications were the major causes of water quality problems due to agricultural runoff and flow modification and regulation.
OTHER FACTS -- The name "Rockford" comes from a rock-bottomed "ford," or shallow area, along the Rock River where settlers could cross the river. This ford and the people it drew together helped lead to the development of one of Illinois' largest cities.

SALINE RIVER/BAY CREEK RIVER BASIN

LENGTH -- 75.5 miles for Saline River
DRAINAGE -- 1,128,300 acres
TRIBUTARIES/LAKES/CITIES -- Tributaries include the South, Middle and North Forks of the Saline River. Cities in the area include Marion, Harrisburg, Eldorado, Norris City and Shawneetown.
WATER QUALITY -- All reading are from IEPA 1995. Saline River: All of the 28.2 stream miles assessed were rated "fair." North Fork Saline River: Assessed water quality as "fair." Bay Creek: Of 61.9 stream miles assessed, 12.8 were "good" and 49.1 were "fair."
POLLUTANTS -- Saline River: Causes of pollution include inorganics, nutrients, siltation, organic enrichment (low dissolved oxygen) and other habitat alterations attributed to agricultural runoff, hydrologic/habitat modification and resource extraction. North Fork Saline River: Causes of pollution were metals, inorganics, nutrients, other habitat alterations and suspended solids attributed to agricultural runoff and hydrologic/habitat modification. Bay Creek: Causes of pollution were nutrients, siltation, flow alteration and other habitat alterations attributed to agricultural runoff and hydrologic/habitat modifications.
OTHER FACTS -- Big Creek, Big Grand Pierre Creek and Lusk Creek are all found in this section of Illinois. These streams have some of the highest quality running waters in Illinois.

SANGAMON RIVER

LENGTH -- 206 miles
DRAINAGE -- 3,456,000 acres
TRIBUTARIES/LAKES/CITIES -- Salt Creek and South Fork are the largest tributaries of the Sangamon River. Lake Decatur is the only lake located directly on this river. Springfield and Decatur are situated along this river.
WATER QUALITY -- All stream miles of the Sangamon River tested were assessed as "fair" (IEPA 1995).
POLLUTANTS -- Causes of pollution include nutrients, siltation and organic enrichment (low dissolved oxygen) attributed to agriculture, hydrologic/habitat modifications, urban runoff and point sources.
OTHER FACTS -- One of the major natural features of the Sangamon River is the forest tract at Robert Allerton Park near Monticello. This natural area is an example of a relatively undisturbed stream-valley ecosystem including bottomland forest, upland forest, reclaimed prairie and wetlands.

SPOON RIVER

LENGTH -- 163.6 miles
DRAINAGE -- 1,187,000 acres
TRIBUTARIES/LAKES/CITIES -- Tributaries include Brush, Cedar and Swan creeks. Cities in the area include Wyoming and Lewistown.
WATER QUALITY -- A 1995 IEPA report rated the Spoon River's 123.7 stream miles as "fair."
POLLUTANTS -- The primary cause of water quality problems is siltation with nutrients from nonpoint agricultural sources and coal mining being secondary.
OTHER FACTS -- This river was made famous by a collection of poems, the *Spoon River Anthology*, published in 1914-15 by Edgar Lee Masters. Although born in Kansas in 1868, Masters was raised in the Lewistown area and was impressed by the Spoon River and the Oak Hill Cemetery nearby. His poems are based on his impressions of the area and the local residents' lives.

VERMILION (WABASH) RIVER BASIN

LENGTH -- 105.6 miles

DRAINAGE -- The Vermilion River drains nearly 900,000 acres. The Little Vermilion River drains 125,440 acres in Illinois with the remainder of the watershed in Indiana.

TRIBUTARIES/LAKES/CITIES -- The major tributaries are the North Fork, Middle Fork and Salt Fork Vermilion rivers and Stony Creek. Lake Vermilion is found on the North Fork. Cities in the area include Rossville, Danville, Rantoul, Champaign and Urbana.

WATER QUALITY -- On the Vermilion River itself, all 24.8 stream miles assessed were rated "fair" (IEPA 1995). The North Fork Vermilion River had all 48.2 stream miles assessed "good" in terms of overall resource quality. All of the 47.7 stream miles assessed of the Middle Fork of the Vermilion River were rated as "good". All stream miles assessed on the Little Vermilion River were considered "good" in terms of overall resource quality.

POLLUTANTS -- For the Vermilion River pollution is due to nutrients and siltation. Pollution sources are agriculture and point sources. Causes of pollution for the North Fork Vermilion River include nutrients and siltation due to agricultural runoff and point sources. No causes or sources of pollution have been identified for the Middle Fork or Little Vermilion.

OTHER FACTS -- The Middle Fork Vermilion River is the only National Scenic River in Illinois. The good water quality and good instream habitat have resulted in a diverse fish community in this river. The Little Vermilion River is considered to be an "A" stream, or a unique aquatic resource. It supports two fish and two mussel species that are considered threatened or endangered in Illinois.

WABASH RIVER

LENGTH -- 230 miles as an Illinois border river

DRAINAGE -- 5,496,500 acres in Illinois

TRIBUTARIES/LAKES/CITIES -- Major tributaries of the Wabash in Illinois include the Embarras, Vermilion and Little Wabash Rivers. Cities along the river in Illinois include Palestine and Mt. Carmel.

WATER QUALITY -- All of the 81.4 stream miles assessed on the middle Wabash River were rated as "good" with no causes or sources of pollution identified (IEPA 1995). All of the 117.7 stream miles assessed in the lower Wabash River were rated as "fair."

POLLUTANTS -- For the lower Wabash, causes of pollution include nutrients, siltation, metals and salinity attributed to agricultural runoff, resource extraction and point sources (IEPA 1995).

OTHER FACTS -- The Wabash is the largest natural free-flowing river east of the Mississippi River.