

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.

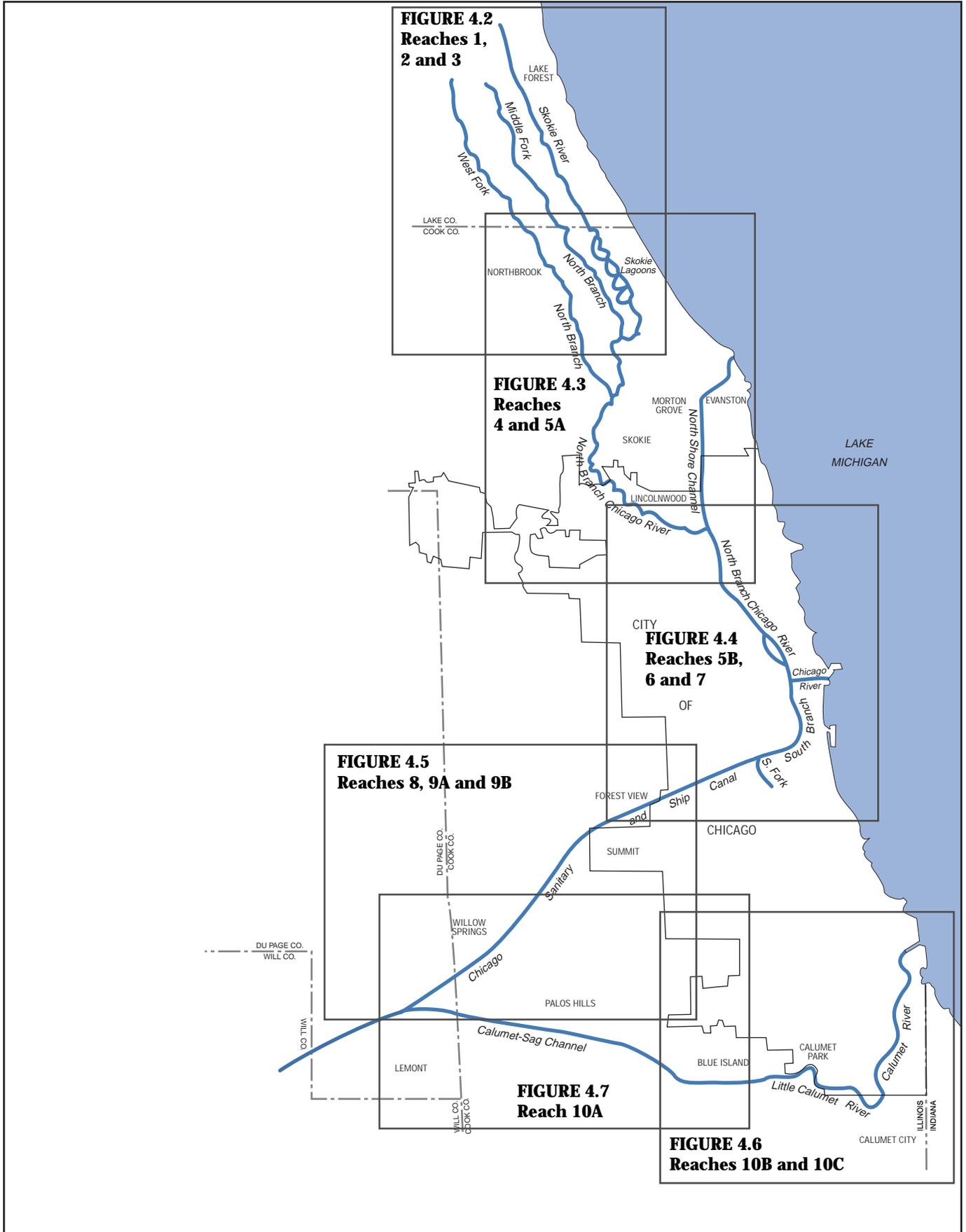


FIGURE 4.1
Map of study reaches with location of recreation-open space maps (Figures 4.2-4.7)

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 Bioreserve 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.