

This information could
save you money!

Living on the Fox River



A Riverfront Property Owners Guide

This brochure was developed by Fox River Ecosystem Partnership in cooperation with the Kane-DuPage Soil & Water Conservation District and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Frequently Asked Questions by Riverfront Property Owners

A word about permits....and fines

Three agencies oversee construction activities on shorelines and within the river. These are the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps); the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Office of Water Resources (IDNR/OWR); and the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA). When you are required to apply for a permit the Joint Application Form is reviewed by all three agencies. Municipal or County building and zoning codes and floodplain ordinances also may apply depending on the type of activity. Permit applications can be obtained by calling these agencies or downloading the permit application from the IDNR or Corps web pages. Failure to apply for appropriate permits may make you liable for federal fines or penalties. In addition you are required to obtain a permit from your community as required in the Kane County Stormwater Ordinance. Contact your respective municipality or county jurisdiction.

My shoreline is eroding- what can I do?

There are many ways to stabilize and protect your shoreline from erosion. The recommended method is the use of native vegetation with bioengineering techniques. A Corp and IDNR/OWR permit is required for work that includes: grading, installation of shoreline stabilization materials and structures including piers and decks. Learn more about stabilization techniques by downloading the "Streambank and Shoreline Protection Manual" from Lake County Stormwater Management Commission at www.co.lake.il.us/smc.

Should I use a seawall to protect my property?

While seawalls are effective at protecting your property, they can have a negative effect on your neighbors. The seawall will deflect the erosive force of the waves and cause erosion downstream. In addition, a seawall provides no habitat for wildlife.

Can I build a screen porch, gazebo, fence or any other structure by the riverside, or a pier into the river?

New habitable buildings and fences within the floodway are not allowable as they do not meet the appropriate use criteria established by state law. Contact the Corps and IDNR/OWR to learn about specific permit requirements. The allowable length of a pier is dependent on the width of the river at the site.

What should I do about a dead tree that has fallen into the river?

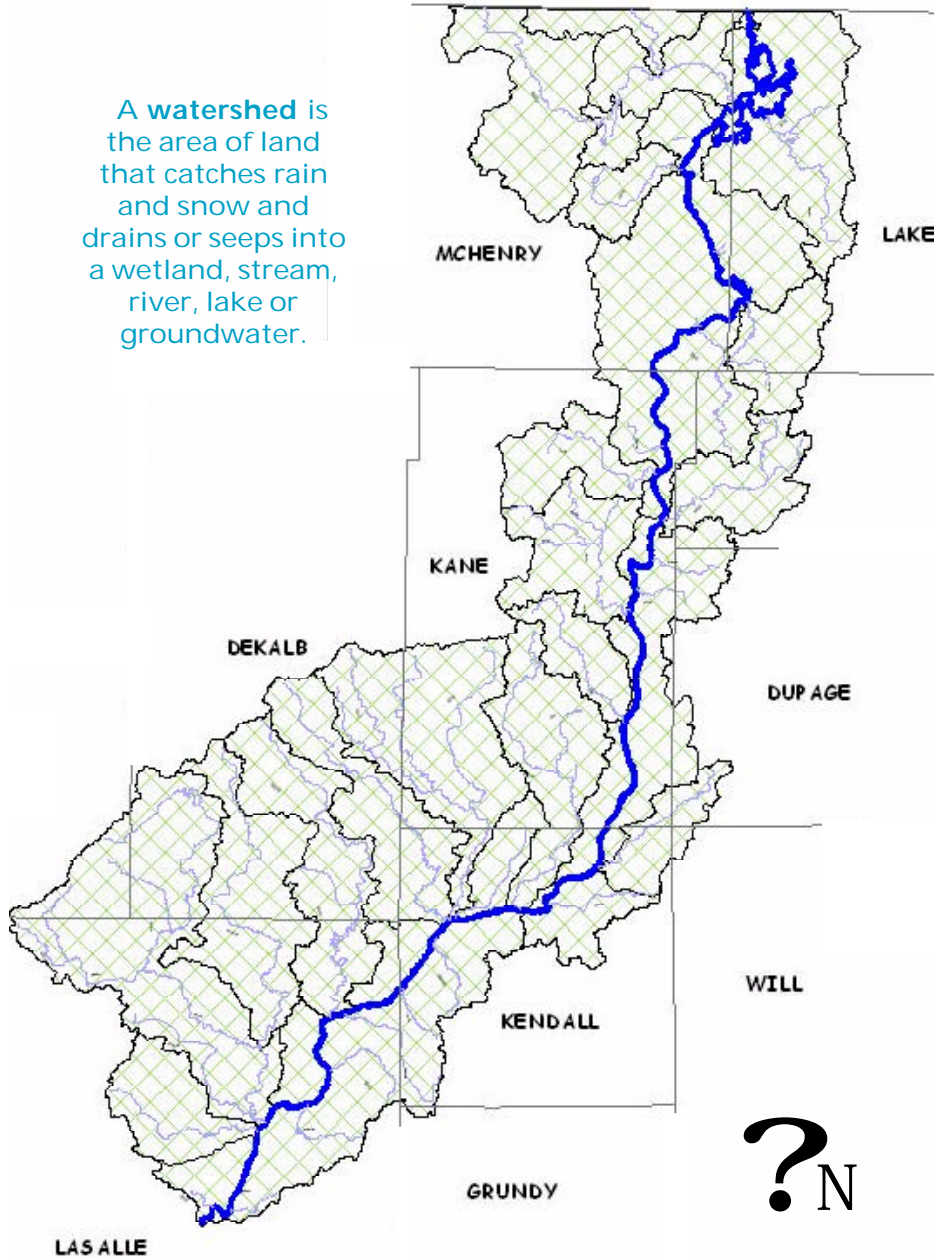
Fallen trees should be removed if they interfere with river navigation. Fallen "snags", however, do provide habitat and serve a useful purpose. Snags should be staked or wired securely so they do not move downstream.

Where do I report illegal activities or violations?

If you suspect someone is in violation of activities requiring permitting, such as extending their shoreline, changing the grade of the shoreline or building activities within the floodplain, floodway, or wetlands contact the Corps at 312.353.6400, Ext. 4026 and the IDNR/OWR at 847.705.4341.

Fox River Watershed in Illinois

A watershed is the area of land that catches rain and snow and drains or seeps into a wetland, stream, river, lake or groundwater.



Everything you do on your property affects your neighbor downstream.
We all live downstream!

Best Management Practices

Best Management Practices (BMPs) are practices used to control the generation and delivery of pollutants to surface and groundwater water resources. Pollutants may be chemicals as well as soil particles.

Shoreline vegetation is best!

A planted buffer of native vegetation not only helps hold the soil in place with its deep roots, but acts as a filter, reducing the velocity of water leaving the land, thus allowing sediments to settle out of the water.

Vegetative Stabilization

Shoreline erosion can mean a loss of property. Bioengineering techniques such as cocoa rolls and vegetation are preferable solutions to erosion over seawalls and hardscaping because they absorb instead of reflecting erosive waves. Shoreline stabilization requires permits.

Septic Maintenance

Septic tanks should be cleaned out every 2-3 years. In-home water conservation practices include using toilet dams, sink aerators, and low-flow shower heads help septic function better. Septic system discharge is a primary contributor of phosphorous pollution.

Environmental Friendly Lawn Care

Avoid using lawn fertilizers and pesticides. Never dispose of pet and yard waste in the river. Plant vegetative buffer strips along riverfront to prevent erosion. Mowed turfgrass to the rivers edge does not have the root depth needed to hold and stabilize soil.

Properly use/dispose of household chemical and automobile fluids

Recycle oil and antifreeze at local shops and oil change facilities. Use bleach and toilet cleaners sparingly. Avoid phosphate-based detergents and cleaners.

Stormwater and Storm Drains

Storm drains outlet directly to the river. Never dump used oil, chemicals, or yard waste down a storm drain. Impervious surfaces such as driveways and parking lots carry soil sediments, oil and auto-emission pollutants in stormwater. Limiting impervious surfaces or directing stormwater to a settling pond prior to outlet into the river is a preferable treatment method.

Resources

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Chicago District

Regulatory Branch
111 N. Canal St., Suite 600
Chicago, IL 60606-7206
312.353.6428 Ext. 4026
www.lrc.usace.army.mil/co-r

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Chicago District

(Corps) administers a permit program which regulates activities in waters and wetlands in northeastern Illinois. The Corps regulates structures or work in, over, or under navigable waters of the United States. Permits are required for projects such as marinas, bank stabilization, shoreline protection, piers, pipelines, dredging or other work in navigable waters. The Fox River is a Navigable Waterway. The Corps also regulates discharges of dredged or fill material in waters of the United States, including wetlands. Mechanized land clearing, grading, leveling, ditching and redistribution of material within "waters of the United States", including wetlands, are examples of regulated activities.

IL Dept. of Natural Resources, Office of Water Resources

201 W. Center Court
Schaumburg, IL 60196-1096
847.705.4341
dnr.state.il.us/waterresources

Illinois Dept. of Natural Resources, Office of Water Resources (IDNR/OWR)

has jurisdiction over construction activities proposed within the floodway and the water of the Fox River. The floodway boundary is shown on the Flood Insurance Study Mapping published by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for your community or unincorporated area. The maps can be viewed at the Kane-DuPage Soil & Water Conservation or the IDNR/OWR office. Most types of construction require a permit. Permit forms can be found at <http://dnr.state.il.us/waterresources> or by calling the IDNR/OWR office. Filling in public water to convert it to private use is strictly prohibited.

Kane-DuPage Soil & Water Conservation District

545 S. Randall Road
St. Charles, IL 60174
630.584.7961 Ext. 3
www.kanedupageswcd.org

Kane-DuPage Soil & Water Conservation District, a

local unit of government, was established under the Illinois Soil and Water Conservation District Act. The Act gives SWCD's the responsibility to provide technical information to individuals and groups on methods of soil and water conservation, and provide natural resource inventory information on properties slated for zoning changes.

Other Resources

For building/zoning questions for county residents:

Kane County Development Department

719 Batavia Ave.
Geneva, IL 60134
630.208.3480
www.co.kane.il.us (see *County Departments*)

For lake/pond/wetland water quality assistance:

Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission (NIPC)

222 S. Riverside Plaza, Ste. 1800
Chicago, IL 60606
312.454.0400
www.nipc.cog.il.us

For questions on wetlands, wetland restoration, migratory birds and federally endangered species:

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Chicago Field Office

1250 S. Grove Avenue, Suite 103
Barrington, IL 60010
847.381.2253
midwest.fws.gov/Chicago

For watershed information and resources:

Fox River Ecosystem Partnership

www.FoxRiverEcosystem.org

Friends of the Fox River

www.FriendsoftheFoxRiver.org

Contact your local municipality or village for other resources.