



NeighborSpace

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August 4, 2008

John Therriault, Assistant Clerk
Illinois Pollution Control Board
100 West Randolph Street, Suite 11-500
Chicago, Illinois 60601

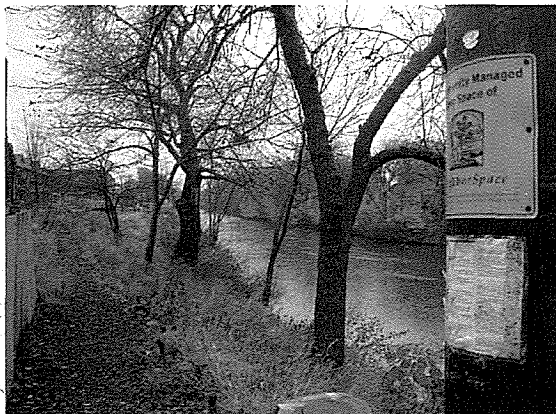
PC# 82
RECEIVED
CLERK'S OFFICE
AUG 06 2008
STATE OF ILLINOIS
Pollution Control Board

RE: Rule Making R08-009

Dear Illinois Pollution Control Board:

My name is Ben Helphand. I am the Executive Director of NeighborSpace, Chicago's land trust for community managed open space. In the interest of restoring the shoreline ecosystem for future generations and to protect the health of community members who steward restoration projects along the Chicago and Lower Des Plaines Rivers, I would like to express our support for the strong water quality standards proposed by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) for the Chicago Area Waterways System (CAWS) and Lower Des Plaines River (LDPR).

NeighborSpace is dedicated to preserving community established and managed gardens, small neighborhood parks, and scenic river ways for recreation, gardening, education and enjoyment. Since 1998, NeighborSpace has leased a mile long stretch of land along the eastern edge of the north branch of the Chicago River between Montrose and Berteau Avenues on behalf of the community. This stretch of land has been restored by the Riverside Neighbors, the community stewards, as a natural river edge. This group has established walking trails along the river edge and has restored the riverside with native flora and fauna. It is used intensively for recreation, peaceful enjoyment, bird watching, access to the Chicago River, and by the Waters Elementary School for their outdoor education and water quality program. The stewards note that since their restoration work began thousands of people have been able to use the paths and river access and many have been moved to join as stewards and advocates for healthy river ecology.

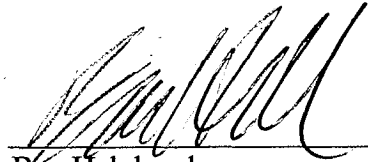


"For so many people in the neighborhood the river is an anomaly in a big city. It's a magic place. For them, they find quiet, solitude, beauty, and hope of a more wholesome life in a big city. They are hoping for the day that they can dip their feet in and splash instead of worrying about the dangers of current use"

Pete Leki,
NeighborSpace Garden Leader

Community managed open spaces provide a unique social and environmental connection for communities and provide an opportunity to safely enjoy the natural environment within Chicago. With a healthier river system we hope we will be able to expand community interaction with our rivers and river edges. NeighborSpace firmly supports the IEPA rulemaking water quality standards because the health of our water system, river edge habitats, and the communities who enjoy them are crucial to our work.

Submitted by:



Ben Helphand
Executive Director
NeighborSpace
25 E. Washington, Suite 1670
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Date:

August 9, 2008