

Confluence

People getting together to enhance Salt Creek



Volume 7, Issue 2

'It's Our River Day' Saturday, Sept. 17, 2005

SALT CREEK CLEAN UP

Saturday, Sept. 17 is 'It's Our River Day' in Illinois! Join the Salt Creek Watershed Network in celebrating by cleaning the Salt Creek. Most work is done from the shore. All ages are invited, but children

under 18 need to have their parent or guardian sign for them. Young children must be accompanied by an adult.

Help The Creek!

Plan to spend
September 17th
making a difference!

We will be working from 3 locations along the Salt

Creek. There's one near you! Join your fellow creek enthusiasts as we tidy up the creek. We will be passing out our useful, colorful, refrigerator magnets to participants.

Fullersburg Woods Forest Preserve.

9:00 am - noon. Meet in the Nature Center parking lot, enter on Spring Rd in Oakbrook, south of 31st St. and west of York Rd. Contact is Chris Oszak (630)832-4189. Large groups should register with Chris Linnell at the DuPage Forest Preserve offices, (630)933-7681.

Elk Grove Village 9:00 am - noon.

Meet in the Elk Grove Village High School parking lot. Bring waders if you have them. Contact is Nick Nikola, (847)593-5410.

LaGrange Park Woods forest preserve,

9:00 am - noon. Meet in the parking lot on the corner of LaGrange Rd. and 31st St. Contact Ron Hursh with any questions, (708)354-4434.

Fly Over Salt Creek!

At the October 3rd SCWN Board meeting, Stephen McCracken from The Conservation Foundation will be showing a DVD of the USGS flyover of Salt Creek. It's an opportunity to get a big picture look at our creek and watershed. The Board meets at 7:00 pm at the Community Bank 330 W. Butterfield Rd in Elmhurst.

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OOZING OIL FOUND IN ADDISON CREEK

By Mark Peterson

Earlier in the summer, I had noticed oil slicks on Salt Creek while I was biking along the creek. I had noticed the oil on the water from the bridge at 17th Street in Broadview/ La Grange Park area). I walked along the bank and noticed that the oil was actually entering Salt Creek from Addison Creek.

I spent a couple of days trying to track down the source of the oil and finally located a spot on Addison Creek in the Industrial Park north of 22nd Street. It seemed to be entering the creek from alongside a storm sewer and possibly from under the bank as well.

I took photos and contacted the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) and talked to Alan Anderson. He came out and confirmed that it looked like the a point source and suggested I call the Chicago's Water Reclamation District (MWRD) Pollution Control department to check the storm sewers to see if anyone might be hooked up to one.

One of their people, Mike McKuen came out and pulled the sewer covers. He felt that it was probably a "one-time" dump or spill into the storm sewer and the oil was possibly working through a crack and finding its way into the creek.

He then had the Village of Broadview come out and they put a boom around it. That reduced the oil on the water quite a bit. As I continued to watch the creek I was suspicious that there might be another area that oil was getting into the water.

MWRD's McKuen didn't feel that the oil slick was large enough to cause a fish kill but I pointed out

that other wildlife, like beavers and deer, swim in and drink the water all along the creek. I continued watching and at first it seemed better. Then one day I saw a big slick covering almost the entire width of the creek. I went to the source again in the Industrial Park and could see it coming into the water fairly heavily.



I called the EPA and left a message to let them know the status. I also called MWRD. I talked to Bob Gaggiano, he went out that day, and found where the oil was wicking into the creek but was unable to identify the exact source. He agreed it was some kind of fuel oil based on the smell. He checked the sewers again and could find no oil in the sewers.

With the continued drought there have been no oil sightings reported recently in that section of Addison Creek, which is nearly dry, or Salt Creek. I spoke with Alan Anderson and he thinks it may have been runoff from a parking lot spill. I will continue to monitor the situation and keep close contact with SCWN.

To Report a Pollution Event

Call IEPA's Citizen Pollution Complaint Hotline:

1-800-782-7860

Fish Kill in the Salt Creek

By Chris Oszak

On Sunday morning, June 5, 2005, I received a message about dead fish in the Salt Creek north of the dam in Fullersburg Woods Forest Preserve. The cause was unknown. I live upstream of Fullersburg Woods so I took a zigzag route to the preserve crisscrossing the Salt Creek below each sanitary treatment plant looking for any signs of dead fish. There weren't any until I got to Fullersburg.

Then just north of the Graue Mill dam I heard a flock of seagulls that had come for the dead fish buffet. Dozens of birds flying across the water and suddenly sweeping down to grab a fish from the surface of the water.

After I watched this spectacle for awhile I started walking along the shore looking for all these fish. I didn't find one big collection of dead fish, but they were scattered here and there along the length of the creek from the Graue Mill dam up past the nature center. It wasn't just one species, but many kinds and sizes of fish.

On Monday Don LaBrose, the DuPage County FPD Fisheries Biologist, found an estimated 200-250 dead fish along that stretch of the Salt Creek. I'm sure the seagulls ate at least that many more. The fish he found included Common Carp, White Suckers, Largemouth Bass, Bluegill, Green Sunfish, Orange-spotted Sunfish, Black Bullhead, Yellow Perch, and Creek Chub.

I was impressed by the diversity of fish in the Salt Creek, but I was dismayed to learn that LaBrose found many of the pan fish with Black Spot (a para-

site). While Black Spot may not have been the cause of death for all the fish, it weakened those that did have the parasite. LaBrose concludes "that the fish died from a combination of several environmental stress factors."

The weather situation prior to the fish kill was cool temperatures (water temperature in the low 60's) and the creek was at a low water level. The water quality above the Graue Mill Dam is considered by the IEPA to be very low quality. Take these conditions and add a heavy rain event on Saturday, June 4, 2005, with the introduction of warm water (extreme temperature change in short period of time) and also a drop in the dissolved oxygen level. This will stress fish to the point of death."

The Salt Creek is in much better shape than it was 30 years ago before the Clean Water Act, but there's still a lot of work to be done to bring the water in the creek up to standards. We can't do anything about the droughts that produce low water levels and the heavy rains that quickly change water temperature, but we can work on problems like low dissolved oxygen content and conditions that favor parasites.

The Salt Creek Watershed Network is part of a workgroup that is addressing water quality in the Salt Creek and East and West Branches of the DuPage River. Change won't happen overnight, but over the next few years we'll have programs in place that should have a positive impact on the water quality in the Salt Creek.



TMDL WORK GROUP TO VOTE ON BYLAWS!

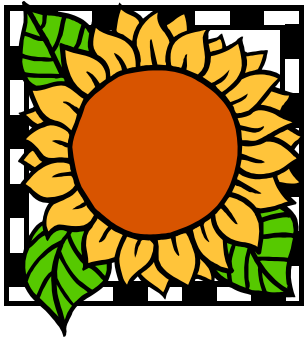
On September 28, 2005, there will be a meeting to review and vote on accepting the bylaws for the TMDL work group. This group will be reformed as a not for profit organization called the DuPage River Salt Creek Work Group. The change is to facilitate receiving funds from participating agencies and municipalities and for grant writing.



Confluence

526 N. Edgewood Ave.,
LaGrange Park, IL 60526

www.saltcreekwatershed.org



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SCWN Needs Your Support

In an effort to raise much needed funds to continue our work in the watershed, SCWN will be starting a membership program soon. Look for details in our fall issue.

Please indicate your donation amount and make check payable to the Salt Creek Watershed Network and send to: SCWN, 526 N. Edgewood Ave., LaGrange Park, IL 60526.

- ☐ \$15 individual support
- ☐ \$30 family support
- ☐ \$50 gift donation
- ☐ \$ _____ other donation

Thank you for your support!!!

Visit Our Website Often

saltcreekwatershed.org

The SCWN Board of Directors:

Ron Hursh	La Grange Park
Nick Nikola	Elk Grove Village
Keith Olson	Elmhurst
Christine Oszak	Villa Park
Tom Richardson	Oak Brook



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