

Fox River Study Group

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2020 Update to Fox River Valley Community

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Background

For over a decade, a diverse coalition of stakeholders (see Directors sidebar and Supporters list below) has been leading a watershed-wide effort to understand and improve the water quality of the Fox River and its tributaries for the Fox River Study Group (FRSG). This undertaking has received widespread financial and in-kind support from watershed communities, water reclamation districts, environmental organizations and foundations. Our efforts have been encouraged by the USEPA, IEPA, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning and engaged the scientific expertise of the Illinois State Water Survey (ISWS) and private consultants.

To make informed decisions about how best to maintain and improve the quality of the Fox River in our urbanizing watershed, we have developed two computer models of the Fox River watershed. These models are currently being updated to assess management scenarios to address the low dissolved oxygen and nuisance algae problems in the Fox River. Model results will be used to help evaluate and determine the most cost-effective measures to improve the overall health of the river with respect to these impairments. Ongoing, the models and their results will aid urban planning efforts including MS4 permits, wastewater treatment facility expansion plans, tributary watershed plans, and stormwater management for communities throughout the Fox River watershed.

Recent Accomplishments

In addition to the model updates, FRSG has completed several other projects recently. A new water quality monitoring sonde was deployed in at the Stratton Dam to collect data in support of the modeling efforts. This sonde provides real-time, [publicly available data](#) and is maintained by the United States Geological Survey (USGS) FRSG members worked with the Illinois EPA to revise the current Special Condition language found in all NPDES permits for facilities in the watershed to more specifically describe our efforts. The ISWS has completed the Fox River Water Quality Trends report, which is primarily based on 17 years of monthly all-volunteer water quality monitoring efforts of the FRSG. Over the last decade, the ISWS analysis found that most nutrient-related pollutants levels are declining or show no trend. This report, along with many other resources, is available on our website. Based on preliminary information received from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers from their Fox River Habitat & Connectivity Study of the river's dams, a focus group was completed in December 2018 to assess public opinion on dam removal. Modeling, public education and information distribution continued into 2019.

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Upcoming Initiatives

We will continue public outreach and participation as we work to update the Fox River Implementation Plan (FRIP). The FRIP is scheduled to be completed in 2020 and will detail specific steps to be taken to improve the quality of the Fox River. We will then work with entities throughout the Fox River watershed to build community support and to find the resources needed to implement the projects we have identified. Beginning in January 2020, we have contracted with a public communications firm to build public awareness and trust of the group to further our proposed initiatives. Later this year, we anticipate releasing a long-range project plan and 10-year funding plan to demonstrate fiscal transparency.

Thank You to Our Financial and In-Kind Supporters

The Fox River Study Group greatly appreciates the continued support from:

Financial Support

Village of Algonquin
City of Aurora
Village of Barrington
City of Batavia
Village of Cary
Village of East Dundee
Village of Elburn
City of Elgin
Fox River Water Rec. District
City of Geneva
Village of Gilberts
Kane County

Lake of the Hills Sanitary District
City of Plano
Village of Sandwich
City of St. Charles
Illinois EPA
USEPA
Village of Wauconda
City of Yorkville
Yorkville-Bristol Sanitary District

In-Kind Support

Village of Algonquin
City of Crystal Lake

City of Elgin
Deuchler Engineering Corporation
Environmental Defenders of McHenry County
Fox Metro Water Reclamation District
Fox River Water Reclamation District
Friends of the Fox River
Gardner Carton & Douglas
Illinois EPA
Illinois State Water Survey
Northern Moraine Water Reclamation District
Sierra Club

Because each and every resident in every Fox Valley community enjoys the benefits that the Fox River provides, we ask each community in the watershed to budget just 25¢ per capita in its yearly budget to support these efforts. Together, we share the expense to identify the best options for maintaining the health of the Fox River watershed.

We invite all stakeholders to attend our monthly meetings which will be held the 4th Thursday of each month at 9:30 am at the Fox Metro Water Reclamation District's offices on Rt. 31 in Oswego. Feel free to contact any of the FRSG directors listed via the emails in the sidebar if you have thoughts or questions. **We look forward to working with all watershed stakeholders in creating cost-effective and scientifically-based solutions to improve the Fox River.**

Sincerely,



Tom Muth, Treasurer
Fox River Study Group

p.s. In order to ensure our records are up-to-date, please email us at info@foxriverstudygroup.org with the names of all members of your community or group's leadership who you wish to be included in emails from the Fox River Study Group, including general announcements and agendas for our monthly meetings.