

AMERICA'S MOST ENDANGERED RIVERS OF 2004

TEN RIVERS REACHING THE CROSSROADS
IN THE NEXT 12 MONTHS

BRINGING RIVERS TO LIFE



American Rivers
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AMERICAN RIVERS



ABOUT AMERICA'S MOST ENDANGERED RIVERS

Each year since 1986, American Rivers and its partners in the river movement have released the America's Most Endangered Rivers report to highlight rivers nationwide reaching crucial crossroads. The report highlights acute threats rather than chronic conditions; it is not a list of the nation's "worst" or most polluted rivers.

American Rivers solicits nominations annually from thousands of river groups, conservation organizations, outdoor clubs, and individual activists. Our staff and scientific advisors review the nominations for the following criteria:

- The magnitude of the threat to the river
- A major decision point in the coming year affecting that threat
- The regional and national significance of the river

This report does more than list problems; it highlights alternatives and solutions, identifies those who will make the crucial decisions, and points out opportunities for the public to take action on behalf of each listed river. America's Most Endangered Rivers has a distinguished track record of improved public policy decisions that benefit listed rivers.

Recognizing that the threats facing the listed rivers are seldom unique, each report includes a special chapter that explores a broader issue suggested by the rivers on the list that year. This year's report explores how new loopholes and lax enforcement of clean water laws will accelerate the trend towards more polluted rivers nationwide.

ABOUT AMERICAN RIVERS

American Rivers, founded in 1973, is the leader of a nationwide river conservation movement. American Rivers is dedicated to protecting and restoring healthy natural rivers, and the variety of life they sustain, for the benefit of people, fish and wildlife.

ON THE COVER:

AMERICA'S MOST ENDANGERED RIVERS OF 2004 (LEFT TO RIGHT): **SNAKE RIVER (#3)**, Ingredients include: hot water, chopped up salmon, invasive predators; **TENNESSEE RIVER (#4)**, Ingredients include: water, sewage, E. coli, dysentery, hepatitis, cryptosporidium; **ALLEGHENY AND MONONGAHELA RIVERS (#5)**, Ingredients include: water, acid, iron, aluminum, manganese; **COLORADO RIVER (#1)**, Ingredients include: water, uranium, nitrates, ammonium perchlorate, ammonia; **PEACE RIVER (#8)**, Ingredients include: water, clay, uranium, radium; **HOUSATONIC RIVER (#7)**, Ingredients include: water, PCBs; **BIG SUNFLOWER RIVER (#2)**, Ingredients include: water, DDT, toxaphene; **SPOKANE RIVER (#6)**, Ingredients include: water, sewage, lead, arsenic, zinc, and cadmium; **MISSISSIPPI RIVER (#10)**, Ingredients include: water, sediment, nutrients, pesticides; **BIG DARBY CREEK (#9)**, Ingredients may soon include: stormwater, trash, sediment, fertilizer, automotive fluids

Photo of bottles by Harriet Wise. Photo credits for bottle labels which contain photos: Allegheny and Monongahela rivers: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; Colorado River: Tim Palmer; Peace River: Environmental PR Group; Housatonic River: ClarkeOutdoors.com; Big Sunflower River: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; Spokane River: photo courtesy Sierra Club; Big Darby Creek: copyright Jim Murtha

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MOST ENDANGERED RIVERS (by rank)

1. Colorado River	13
2. Big Sunflower River	16
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BACK TO THE FUTURE: THE FORGOTTEN



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SEWAGE IN OUR WATER
CAUSES UP TO 3.5 MILLION
ILLNESSES PER YEAR.

THE WHITE HOUSE AND
CONGRESS ARE CARVING
GIANT LOOPHOLES
INTO AMERICA'S CLEAN
WATER LAWS
AND REGULATIONS.

The Colorado River, architect of the Grand Canyon, is America's Most Endangered River of 2004. As a story of one generation's environmental neglect burdening the next, it offers a lesson for our times.

During the Cold War, the U.S. government insulated its contractors from scrutiny as they raced to build a winning arsenal. Along the way, they left behind a mountain of cancer-causing radioactive waste piled along the

banks of the Colorado River in Utah and spilled millions of gallons of rocket fuel along a tributary in Nevada. Foresight could have prevented this, but the prospect of poisoning the river was an afterthought at the time.

This shortsighted cost cutting has left a heavy burden for this generation. Trace amounts of the toxic rocket fuel are found in both the Colorado River and in produce irrigated with its water. No scientist can say for sure if the levels of exposure are safe. Many fear that a flood or earthquake will sweep the radioactive pile into the river someday. Cleanup of these two sites could cost taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars.

Although the days of pleading ignorance about the consequences of water pollution

have passed, the White House and Congress are deliberately carving giant loopholes into the clean water laws and regulations written by earlier leaders who sought to spare other rivers from the Colorado's fate.

They are doing so with the generous encouragement of corporate lobbyists. The environmental group Earthjustice estimates that America's most polluting industries spent more than \$44 million on the 2000 election — giving the largest slice by far to the Bush-Cheney campaign. After the election, the Senate approved the appointments of many campaign contributors to federal positions that regulate polluting activities.

Senator James Jeffords (I-VT) describes the current administration's record as a series of "pervasive actions to undermine our clean water laws." Here are some highlights:

For the past three years, the White House and Congress have cut the budget to enforce environmental laws — with unfortunate results. In December 2003, Knight Ridder newspapers reported that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is issuing less than half as many "violation notices" to polluters as it was before President Bush took office. The size of the fines imposed on violators has dropped, as well.

Polluters have clearly taken advantage of this lax enforcement. In June 2003, the EPA concluded that about one-fourth of the



U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE

LESSON OF THE COLORADO RIVER

nation's largest industrial plants and water treatment facilities were in "significant non-compliance" with water pollution standards at any one time. More than 10 percent of those lawbreakers were dumping 10 times more pollution than allowed into local streams and rivers.

The public only learned about this after someone leaked a copy of the audit to a *Washington Post* reporter.

On his first day in office, President Bush tabled a proposal to require wastewater treatment plants to notify the public when they



spilled raw sewage into local streams and rivers. This silence can be deadly. EPA scientists estimate that up to 3.5 million Americans get sick each year from germs found in sewage-laced water. The young and the old are most likely to die from resulting diseases such as hepatitis and dysentery.

In November 2003, the administration followed up by proposing to sanction “blending” fully and partially treated sewage before dumping it into rivers, asking only that the utility determine (for itself) that rainwater rushing into the sewer made it necessary. This year, having thrown away the stick, the Bush administration withheld the carrots, too. The White House asked Congress to cut the amount of money that EPA will loan to communities for sewage treatment upgrades by more than one-third — almost half a billion dollars — for 2005.

Pollution pouring into America's rivers out

of pipes is compounded by pollution running off the land and the destruction of wetlands and streams. One of the most destructive and polluting land uses is “mountaintop removal” coal mining, a practice that has already buried more than 720 miles of streams and damaged 1,200 more in the Ohio River watershed in recent years.

In August 2001, Deputy Interior Secretary Steven Griles, a former coal lobbyist, assured the West Virginia Coal Association that the Bush administration “places importance on increasing coal production and reducing the barriers that could prevent its development.”

On Griles's watch, the Interior Department has worked steadily to remove restrictions on mining along stream banks or dumping mine rubble and refuse in streambeds, despite clear evidence documenting the spike in flooding, acid drainage, and toxic heavy metals downstream.

Rules that protect wetlands and small streams — which soak up both pollution and floodwaters and provide a home for wildlife — are a favorite target of real estate developers and coal companies. The real estate industry donated more than \$4.3 million to the Bush-Cheney campaign in 2000, the campaign's third-most generous supporter.

In January 2002, the administration issued blanket nationwide permits that aid developers by liberalizing the construction of shopping centers, tract housing, and corporate campuses on wetlands and in flood-prone areas. One year later, the Bush administration ordered federal field staff to stop protecting millions of acres of wetlands and to get approval from Washington superiors before protecting millions more — about 20 percent of the remaining wetlands and many stream miles.

Scientific data makes it clear that this is not the time to yank teeth out of the nation's clean water laws. While America's waters became progressively cleaner from 1973 to 1998, that trend has now reversed itself. The most recent data from 2000 suggests that 40 percent of our rivers, 46 percent of our lakes, and over half our estuaries are too polluted for fishing or swimming.

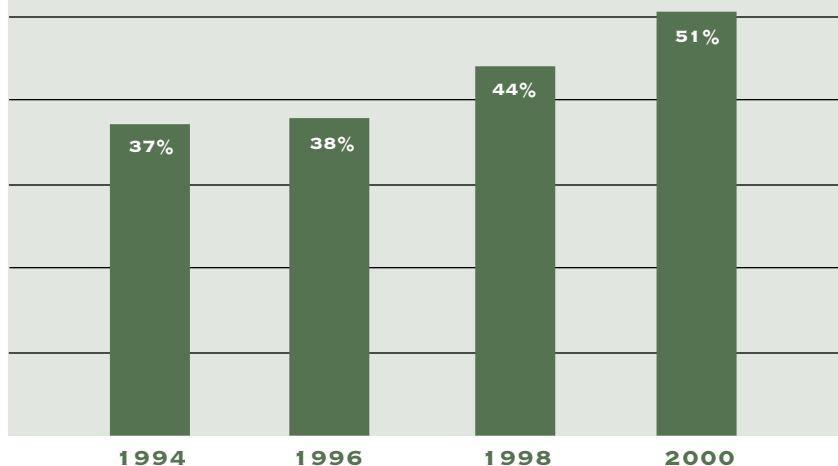
Once again, EPA made this data public only



HUMAN AND ANIMAL EXCRE-
MENT CAN MAKE WATER
UNSAFE TO TOUCH. TOXIC
CHEMICALS AND HEAVY
METALS CAN MAKE WATER
UNSAFE TO DRINK AND FISH
UNSAFE TO EAT.

**WHILE AMERICA'S
WATERS BECAME
PROGRESSIVELY
CLEANER FROM
1973 TO 1998,
THAT TREND HAS
NOW REVERSED
ITSELF.**

WE ALL LIVE DOWNSTREAM: PERCENTAGE OF IMPAIRED ESTUARIES



NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL CHART; DATA SOURCE: EPA OFFICE OF WATER

ESTUARIES — THE MOUTHS
OF RIVERS — RECEIVE
POLLUTION FROM EVERY
RIVER AND STREAM IN THEIR
WATERSHED.

after American Rivers and its partners filed a Freedom of Information Act request for it.

Americans can expect to see this trend towards dirtier water accelerate as polluters across the country exploit new loopholes in clean water laws. American Rivers is preparing for a bumper crop of appeals from frustrated communities all across the country

wanting to highlight new perils for their hometown rivers in future editions of this endangered rivers report.

The lesson of the endangered Colorado River is that relaxing environmental vigilance imposes huge burdens on the next generation. Americans believe that clean water is a right — not a privilege — and they expect leadership — not secrecy — from Washington on a problem that transcends state and local boundaries.

Without a change in course, we are headed back to the future. “By 2016,” former EPA Administrator Christine Whitman warned in a report on sewage released prior to her departure, “pollution levels could be similar to levels observed in the mid-1970s.”

Rebecca R. Wodder

Rebecca R. Wodder
President
American Rivers



U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS



NRCS

WETLANDS AND STREAMS AT RISK

PUBLIC OUTCRY AVERTS GRAVER THREAT

In January 2003, the Bush administration provoked a firestorm of opposition with a pair of actions that threaten wetlands and streams across the country. The first was to issue policy guidance that jeopardizes protections for some 20 million acres of wetlands and many small streams. The second was to launch a process to completely exclude those and other waters from the Clean Water Act. Documents leaked to the *Los Angeles Times* suggested that agency insiders were contemplating a sweeping reduction in the scope of the law.

The public had other ideas. Some 133,000 citizens, scientists, conservation watchdogs, river groups, and hunting and fishing organizations contacted EPA — 99 percent of them protesting the proposal. Thirty-nine states and 244 members of the U.S. Congress also spoke out in opposition to the move. In the end, this outpouring of public and expert opposition convinced administration insiders that they could not completely gut the Act. On Dec. 16, 2003, EPA Administrator Mike Leavitt announced that the administration would not officially write whole classes of waters out of the Clean Water Act.

As sweet as the victory was, it did not remove the threat to clean water. Administrator Leavitt left the destructive policy guidance in place that imposes a double standard, leaving federal field staff free not to protect wetlands and streams. These staff must get approval from supervisors in Washington before protecting certain classes of streams and wetlands, but not if they choose to look the other way when those waters are polluted or developed.

The wetlands and streams at risk are as vital to water quality, flood control and human health as any other wetland and stream. The best-known category of threatened waters is prairie potholes, where up to 70 percent of North America's duck population originates. The administration erroneously calls these and many other types of wetlands "isolated," a term that does not appear in the law. The wetlands are connected to others



U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

through groundwater, wet weather overflows, and the movement of wildlife.

Comments from states to EPA confirm the ongoing threat the policy guidance poses:

"Any extensive change to the scope of streams and wetlands subject to the jurisdiction of the Clean Water Act would reverse 30 years of progress that has been achieved."

— Kentucky Department for Environmental Protection

"While it is hard to show the impact on flooding from the loss of one wetland, the cumulative impact from the loss of wetlands can be staggering. Isolated wetlands have an important role in storing floodwaters."

— Association of State Floodplain Managers

With 60,000 acres of wetlands lost each year even before this guidance was issued, this policy must be halted. To reaffirm that the original Clean Water Act intended to protect all waters of the United States, lawmakers have drafted the Clean Water Authority Restoration Act. Enactment of this bill would eliminate questions about what is and isn't protected by clarifying that Congress's original intent was for the Clean Water Act to cover all waters.

Concerned citizens ready to speak out again — this time to their representatives in the U.S. Congress — can learn more at www.savethe-cleanwateract.org.

AS WETLANDS DISAPPEAR,
FLOODS BECOME MORE
FREQUENT AND SEVERE.

**THE CLEAN
WATER ACT IS
A DAILY TOOL
FOR THE
GROWING RIVER
MOVEMENT.**

For more than 30 years, the Clean Water Act has been a cornerstone of America's efforts to protect public health and improve the quality of our environment. Our waters and rivers are healthier and safer than they were before the Act was passed. The Act not only commits the nation to cleaning up its rivers and streams, it provides the public with opportunities to hold government agencies, polluters, and developers accountable.

All across the country, there is a growing river movement — citizens exercising their rights under the Clean Water Act to improve their communities by restoring rivers and streams. As they go about their business, they keep one eye trained on Washington D.C., where congressional and agency actions have the potential to bolster or scuttle years of work. Here are some of their stories:

**BETH STEWART,
CAHABA RIVER SOCIETY**

Beth Stewart, executive director of the Birmingham, Ala.-based Cahaba River Society, breathed a sigh of relief when the Bush administration backed down from its threats to remove the Clean Water Act's protections



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from many small streams and wetlands. Her organization battles polluters on headwater streams that feed the Cahaba.

"Eliminating protections for small streams ignores watershed science," charged Stewart. "Dumping pollution into a small stream can hurt water quality just as much as dumping it into a major river."

The Cahaba River serves as the drinking water source for Birmingham-area residents — one-fourth of Alabama's population — so water quality in the river is an especially sensitive issue. The river is also a remarkably rich ecosystem, with more species of fish per mile than any other river in North America. The Nature Conservancy designated it as one of eight river "Biodiversity Hotspots" in the United States.

Stewart said the Cahaba watershed and waters throughout Alabama need strong federal water protection requirements because Alabama's Department of Environmental Management is "dysfunctional, underfunded and weak on enforcement."

"Our state agency already takes the least protective interpretation of federal requirements possible," Stewart explained. "If the federal government does not clearly require clean water in certain situations, our state agency is likely to cut that from their program."



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RIVER ACTIVISTS KEEP ONE EYE ON THEIR LOCAL
STREAMS — AND ONE EYE ON WASHINGTON.

ACTION LEAD TO CLEANER WATER

NELSON ROSS, TENNESSEE IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE

While it backed off from a wholesale gutting of clean water protections, the Bush administration continues to dole out favors in the form of loopholes and exemptions sought by polluting interests. One EPA proposal would allow sewage plants to mix partially untreated sewage with fully treated sewage during heavy rains. By allowing these facilities to skip a treatment process, EPA would be sanctioning the release of disease-causing viruses, parasites, pathogens and diseases into rivers and other waters.

This prospect worries Nelson Ross, whose Knoxville, Tenn., office overlooks the Tennessee River. Ross, executive director of the Tennessee Izaak Walton League, said that pollution levels in a troubled river would be worsened. "EPA's new sewage blending proposal," he complained, "is exactly what the Tennessee River doesn't need."

"By making it easier to dump sewage in the river, the EPA is rewarding sewage treatment utilities for dragging their feet on maintenance and upgrades,"

lamented Ross, who describes the Tennessee River's water quality as "compromised."

"Wastewater treatment plants in Knoxville," he reported, "released a billion and a half gal-

lons of partially untreated sewage into the Tennessee River in 2003." Ross also worries about 325 sewage overflows that dumped nearly 9 million gallons of raw sewage into urban streams which flow into the river during that same year.

According to Ross, EPA's new sewage blending proposal would result in more incidents of this nature and less recourse for citizens who want to stop the release of inadequately treated sewage into waters near them.



NRCS

WAYNE FREEMAN, GREAT RIVERS HABITAT ALLIANCE

Sewage plants are big, obvious polluters, but pollution also washes into rivers from fields, lawns, parking lots, and roads, as well. Tackling this type of pollution requires a different approach.

Wayne Freeman, who directs the Great Rivers Habitat Alliance in St. Louis, relies on the Clean Water Act in his fight against urban sprawl in river floodplains. Section 404 of the law recognizes the link between wetlands and cleaner water, and requires developers to get federal approval before digging up or filling wetlands. Freeman keeps a close eye on applications and permits. When something is amiss, he sounds the alarm. If necessary, the law gives him the tools to take legal action.

"Without section 404 of the Clean Water Act, we wouldn't have a lever to push for sound land-use planning on floodplains," Freeman said.

Severe flooding in the 1990s along the Mississippi and Missouri rivers should have inspired more respect for the ways of these

RIVER CONSERVATION MEANS
ENJOYING THE PRESENT AND
PROVIDING FOR THE FUTURE.

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MAINE PEER



large rivers, but Freeman points to a string of recent development proposals on frequently flooded lands near St. Louis that are keeping him busy. Some development is proposed for areas that just a decade ago were covered by 10 feet of water. By defending wetlands,

Freeman protects both clean water and the residents and businesses that might otherwise end up in harm's way.

"Some of the land to be developed isn't just in the floodplain," exclaims Freeman, "it is in that part of the floodplain most vulnerable to flooding."

The provisions of the Clean Water Act are useful not just for protecting wetlands and streams from development. The Act's

Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) program requires states and EPA to identify rivers, lakes and coastal waters that are impaired by polluted runoff, to assess the sources of the pollution, to develop cleanup plans, and to monitor the success of the plans.

BOB ZIMMERMAN, CHARLES RIVER WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

Visitors to Boston often take home beautiful pictures of crew teams rowing on the Charles River at twilight. Bob Zimmerman, executive director of the Charles River Watershed Association, sees the river in a different light.

"We identified the Charles as an impaired, dirty river," said Zimmerman, "and we initiated a program in 1994 that stopped the dumping of 1 million gallons of raw sewage each day into the last 10 miles of the river."

Zimmerman's organization and EPA then developed a TMDL program to clean up the polluted urban runoff. "We're now in the hardest part of the clean-up," he explained.

RIVER CONSERVATIONISTS SAVE
THEIR HOMETOWN RIVERS WITH
THEIR HEARTS, THEIR HANDS,
AND THEIR VOICES.



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CLEAN WATER LEADS TO HAPPY CHILDHOOD MEMORIES.

Zimmerman and his organization are pursuing cutting edge approaches to protect and restore the Charles. Innovative runoff controls, low impact development planning, environmental zoning, and the protection of lands critical to aquifer and river recharge are a few of the programs underway to restore a more natural water cycle to the river.

And the progress has been significant. The Charles, Zimmerman says, is now swimmable 92 percent of the time, compared to 39 percent of the time in 1995. "The river has made a big comeback, and TMDLs are helping us establish new approaches to restoring and protecting the river."

Conservationists like Bob Zimmerman, Wayne Freeman, Nelson Ross, and Beth Stewart are not alone. They are just four of the many committed citizens involved in countless state and local watershed groups who are striving for cleaner water in communities throughout the nation.

OUR PARTNERS

American Rivers gratefully acknowledges the following organizations for their contributions to this report and their ongoing efforts to save the rivers on this year's list.

ALABAMA RIVERS ALLIANCE
 BRACY TUCKER BROWN
 CHARLOTTE COUNTY COMMISSION
 COLORADO RIVER REGIONAL
 SEWER COALITION
 COLUMBIA RIVER INTER-TRIBAL
 FISH COMMISSION
 DARBY CREEK ASSOCIATION
 ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE
 ENVIRONMENTAL FEDERATION OF
 SOUTHWEST FLORIDA
 ENVIRONMENTAL WORKING GROUP
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 FRIENDS OF THE EARTH
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 ASSOCIATION
 PACIFIC COAST FEDERATION OF
 FISHERMEN'S ASSOCIATIONS
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 SAVE OUR WILD SALMON
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 TENNESSEE CLEAN WATER NETWORK
 TENNESSEE IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE
 THE NATURE CONSERVANCY
 WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA COALITION FOR
 ABANDONED MINE RECLAMATION

AMERICA'S MOST ENDANGERED RIVERS OF 2004



1. COLORADO RIVER

2. BIG SUNFLOWER RIVER

3. SNAKE RIVER

4. TENNESSEE RIVER

5. ALLEGHENY & MONONGAHELA RIVERS

6. SPOKANE RIVER

7. HOUSATONIC RIVER

8. PEACE RIVER

9. BIG DARBY CREEK

10. MISSISSIPPI RIVER

#1 COLORADO RIVER

THREAT: LOOMING POLLUTION CRISIS

SUMMARY

While conflict over Colorado River water allocations has grabbed headlines for years, water pollution problems from human waste, toxic chemicals, and radioactive material have been largely overlooked and threaten to get much worse. Unless Congress and the federal government step in to bolster local cleanup efforts, the drinking water for 25 million Americans will remain at risk.

THE RIVER

The Colorado River starts as melting snow in the Rocky Mountains. Covering almost 250,000 square miles, the river basin includes portions of seven states and more than 20 Indian nations. Despite the vastness of its

As much as 20 percent of the river's water evaporates from the reservoirs behind the dams each year. Several of the river's native wildlife species are extinct, and others nearly so. Most years, the river literally evaporates shortly after crossing the border into Mexico. The once vast and rich delta at the river's mouth in the Gulf of California has virtually disappeared as a result.

THE RISK

Three major sources of pollution are seeping into the Colorado River via contaminated groundwater. Some efforts are being made to address each of them, but more aggressive and better-coordinated action is needed to protect the health of the river, the 25 million Americans who drink its water, and the wildlife and parks found along it.

Human waste from riverfront boomtowns in California and Arizona contaminates the river below Hoover Dam. This area has the largest concentration of people in the United States using septic tanks. The overloaded septic systems allow increasing quantities of nitrates to seep into groundwater and the Colorado River. Monitoring wells in the Lake Havasu area have recorded nitrate levels four times higher than the limits set by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to protect the public health. High nitrate levels in drinking water can deplete oxygen in infants' blood ("blue baby" syndrome) and are suspected to cause certain types of cancer. An estimated 1.2 million pounds of nitrates will seep into the regional aquifer between 2001 and 2005.

Riverfront communities in Arizona and

California recognize the problem and are raising capital on their own to upgrade wastewater treatment capacities. They could use some help, but in recent years federal assistance to states for

watershed, the Colorado is a small river, annually averaging only about 1 percent of the Mississippi River's yearly flows.

As the river winds across the Colorado Plateau, the ranches, mines, and reservations of the Old West uneasily share the landscape with the national parks, ski resorts, and suburban sprawl of the New West. When the river pours out of the Grand Canyon in Arizona it enters the Sonoran Desert, where a shortage of water has failed to curb explosive population growth in recent decades.

The Colorado is one of the most intensively used — and abused — river basins in America. More than 40 major dams and diversions siphon water from the river and its tributaries.



RANDY SHOWSTACK

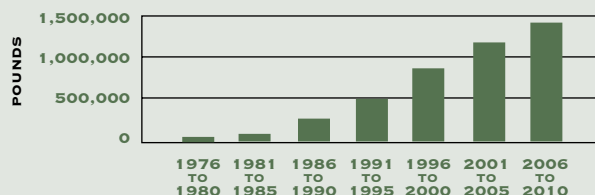


BOB SCHULZ

LEFT: COMMUNITIES ALONG THE LOWER COLORADO RIVER ARE STRUGGLING TO PROVIDE WASTEWATER TREATMENT TO THEIR BOOMING POPULATIONS.

LAKE HAVASU CITY, ARIZ. NITRATE DATA

NITRATE ENTERING GROUNDWATER ALONG THE COLORADO RIVER OVER EACH 5-YEAR PERIOD



SOURCE: COLORADO RIVER REGIONAL SEWER COALITION

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION



POLLUTED WATER FROM COLORADO RIVER WATER IS USED TO IRRIGATE CROPS — TRACE AMOUNTS OF THE TOXIC CHEMICALS CAN BE MEASURED IN PRODUCE ON SUPERMARKET SHELVES ACROSS THE COUNTRY (BELOW).

wastewater treatment facilities has been cut by more than 10 percent, and the current administration proposes slashing some 30 percent — half a billion dollars — from loan programs for facility upgrades.

A second type of contamination is an ingredient in rocket fuel called perchlorate, which has been measured in Lake Mead at concentrations as high as 24 parts per billion. Although no federal health standard for perchlorate has been set, low concentrations can interfere with proper thyroid function and disrupt the body's normal hormonal balance. The potential health effects of perchlorate are especially significant for children because disturbances in thyroid levels during development can lead to lowered IQ, mental retardation, and the loss of hearing, speech and motor skills. The Las Vegas Valley Water District is unable to remove perchlorate from water piped to its residential customers. Lettuce and other leafy vegetables irrigated with Colorado River water contain trace amounts of the chemical — and are found on supermarket shelves across the country during winter months.

The source of perchlorate in the river is a facility in Henderson, Nev., where the government produced missile fuel during the Cold War. The plant is now operated by Kerr-McGee Corporation, which has already spent \$80 million to reduce the volume of polluted

groundwater reaching the river. However, more than 400 pounds of perchlorate still flow from the facility toward Lake Mead each day.

The third pollution source is radioactive mill waste from a defunct facility along the Colorado River near Moab, Utah. With almost 12 million tons of radioactive material stored in

a crude, unlined impoundment on the riverbank, the former Atlas Minerals Corporation site is the fifth largest and single most dangerous uranium tailings pile in the country. An estimated 110,000 gallons of radioactive groundwater seep into the river each day from this site. Uranium is one of the few carcinogens considered dangerous at any level, and levels in the river increase by 1,660 percent in the vicinity of the Atlas site.

Although the precise contribution from the Atlas site is unknown, Southern California's Metropolitan Water District has measured gradually increasing levels of radioactivity in the river hundreds of miles downstream at its Lake Havasu intake, where the drinking water for 16 million people is withdrawn from the river. The National Academy of Sciences has warned that it is "nearly certain that the river's course will run across the Moab site sometime in the future," flooding about a half ton of radioactive material for every man, woman, and child that drinks Colorado River water.

THE 12-MONTH OUTLOOK

The Colorado River is at a crossroads, and the next 12 months will determine whether these problems will continue to fester or a vigorous cleanup effort will begin. The situation as a whole warrants a massive, coordinated federal effort, and there are immediate steps that should be taken to address these pollution sources.

The Department of Energy (DOE) will finalize its plans for the radioactive mill tailings at the Atlas site before the end of 2004. Conservationists believe the best option is to completely remove the mill tailings and contaminated soil from the river floodplain, but the DOE has signaled that it will likely choose less protective options that would not provide sufficient security in the event of a major flood. DOE should not allow cost to dictate its choices. It should commit to the most thorough cleanup possible with current technology.

In the 2004 session of Congress, lawmakers will consider proposals to expand exemptions from environmental laws for the Department of Defense. Conservationists fear these could let the military off the hook for its share of the



ERIC ECKL

cleanup responsibilities at the Kerr-McGee site and elsewhere. Congress should reject those bills and direct EPA to set a scientifically valid drinking water standard for perchlorate that will protect human health.

Also in the 2004 session of Congress, lawmakers will consider President Bush's proposal for sharp cuts in EPA's "State Revolving Loan Funds" program that assists state efforts with loans to upgrade drinking water and wastewater treatment. Funding shortages are the leading reason that communities struggle to meet their obligations to protect water they send downstream. Congress should fully fund this vital program.

In addition, Congress should recognize that the interstate nature of pollution problems in the Colorado River warrant a stronger federal role in cleanup. Congress should direct federal and state agencies to develop a binding action plan and authorize federal funding to restore water quality throughout the river basin — including addressing nitrates, perchlorate, and radioactive materials.

The lingering contamination and staggering remediation costs at the Kerr-McGee and Atlas sites provide a stark reminder that preventing pollution in the first place or cleaning it at the source is always preferable to cleaning it later. Congress should step up its oversight of the Bush administration's



TOM TILL

enforcement and interpretation of the Clean Water Act and pass the Clean Water Authority Restoration Act in the 2004 session to end the lingering debate over which waters are protected by federal law.

IT MAY BE ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE A FLOOD OR EARTHQUAKE SENDS 11 MILLION TONS OF RADIOACTIVE WASTE FROM THE ATLAS URANIUM MILL INTO THE COLORADO RIVER.

CONTACTS

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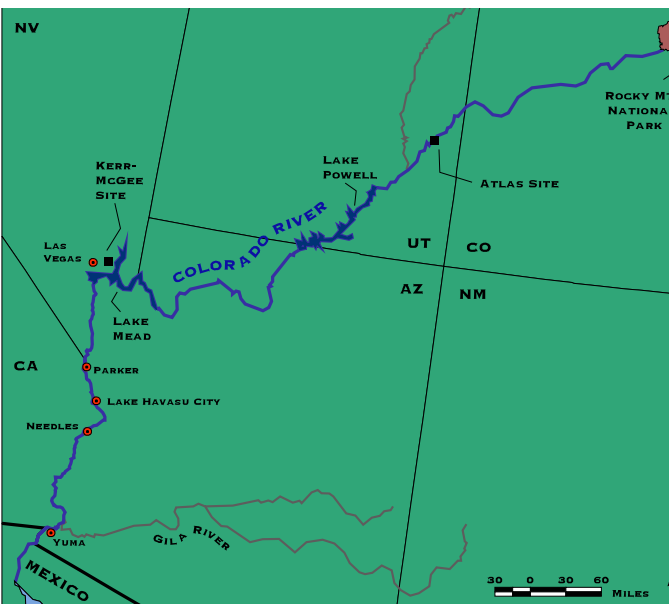
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WWW.AMERICANRIVERS.ORG/COLORADO2004.HTML



#2 BIG SUNFLOWER RIVER

THREAT: WETLANDS DESTRUCTION AND RIVER DREDGING

SUMMARY

A pair of costly flood control boondoggles promoted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers threatens Mississippi's Big Sunflower River. Unless the Bush administration's Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) vetoes the Yazoo Pumps, this single project will drain and damage seven times more wetlands than all the nation's private developers harm in one year. Without firm opposition from EPA and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), the Army Corps will also dredge more than 100 miles of the Big Sunflower's riverbed, destroying even more wetlands, stirring up a toxic stew of pesticides, and endangering the health of those who eat fish caught in the river.

THE RIVER

The slow-moving Big Sunflower meanders through ecologically rich and sparsely populated lowlands of northwestern Mississippi. Near Vicksburg, the Big Sunflower joins the Yazoo River, which soon after empties into the Mississippi River. Despite extensive clearing for agriculture, the Big Sunflower basin retains vast wetland areas and bottomland hardwood forests that teem with wildlife and support waterfowl and other migratory birds in the

Mississippi River flyway. The Big Sunflower is also home to one of the world's most bountiful native mussel beds and more than 50 species of fish. The endangered pondberry, an exceptionally rare plant, is found along the river.

Agriculture drives the region's economy, and in recent decades farms have consolidated into fewer and fewer hands. Soybeans and cotton are the primary crops, but due to surpluses they are profitable only with generous federal price supports. In a single county along the river, just 359 recipients shared more than \$73 million in federal crop subsidies from 1995 to 2002.

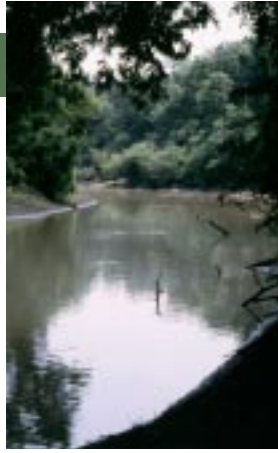
State and federal public lands in the Big Sunflower basin annually host hundreds of thousands of hunters, birdwatchers, and other visitors.



THE RISK

The Army Corps proposes to build the Yazoo Pumps, the largest hydraulic pumping plant ever built, to siphon up to 6 million gallons of water per minute from the Big Sunflower basin. More than three years ago, EPA informed the Army Corps that the pumps would drain and damage 200,000 acres — 300 square miles — of productive wetlands. This sacrifice would be made to intensify farming on marginal lands, and more than 80 percent of the pumps' purported economic benefits would come from increased production of highly subsidized soybean and cotton crops. Even worse, an independent study revealed that the Army Corps has overstated the project's agricultural benefits by \$144 million — more than 75 percent of the estimated \$190 million cost to build the pumps.

To boost the harvest of federal subsidy checks, the pumps would undo decades of effort and tens of millions of tax dollars spent protecting and restoring wetlands in the region. Wetlands that would be damaged include those in a national forest, in two



LOUIE MILLER

THE YAZOO PUMPS WOULD DRAIN AND DAMAGE 200,000 ACRES OF CRITICAL WETLANDS IN THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER FLYWAY TO INCREASE PRODUCTION OF SURPLUS CROPS.



U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE

U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE

national wildlife refuges, and on private lands enrolled in the federally funded wetlands reserve program.

The Big Sunflower also is threatened by a \$62 million Army Corps plan to dredge 104 miles of riverbed, devastating instream habitat, destroying at least 43 percent of the river's ecologically rich mussel beds, and damaging more than 3,600 acres of wetlands. Dredging will stir up a toxic stew of pesticides, including Dichloro-diphenyl-trichloroethane (DDT) and toxaphene, that has accumulated on the river bottom and endanger the health of low income and minority residents who regularly eat fish caught in the river.

Despite the tremendous ecological losses and public health threats, dredging the Big Sunflower will not spare a single acre of land from flooding. It will merely reduce the frequency and duration of floods that will continue to occur on 55,000 acres of floodplain farmland.

Effective flood damage reduction can be achieved at far less cost to taxpayers and the environment through the purchase of conservation easements and targeted flood protection for the few residences and businesses in the area.

THE 12-MONTH OUTLOOK

The Army Corps is expected to recommend that Congress fund construction of the Yazoo Pumps in an Environmental Impact Statement that may be finalized in fall 2004. The agency is scheduled to take the first steps toward recommending the dredging proposal in the next 12 months, as well. These actions will provide opportunities for other federal and state agencies to exercise their authorities to stop these destructive and expensive porkbarrel projects.

The Bush administration EPA should exercise its authority under the Clean Water Act to veto the Yazoo Pumps. An EPA veto is amply supported by the project's extensive ecological damage, the availability of responsible alternatives to protect homes from flooding, and the unjustifiable use of public funds. FWS should assert the Endangered Species Act and other authorities to the fullest extent to halt these projects.

In addition, the state of Mississippi should deny the required Clean Water Act certifications for both the Yazoo Pumps and dredging the Big Sunflower River.

U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE



Congress should decline to fund these wasteful projects, and instead implement overdue reforms of the Army Corps' project planning procedures when it takes up the Water Resources Development Act during the 2004 session. Congress should also pass the Clean Water Authority Restoration Act in the 2004 session to ensure that wetlands and streams in the headwaters of the Big Sunflower River will continue to be protected as they have been for the last 30 years.

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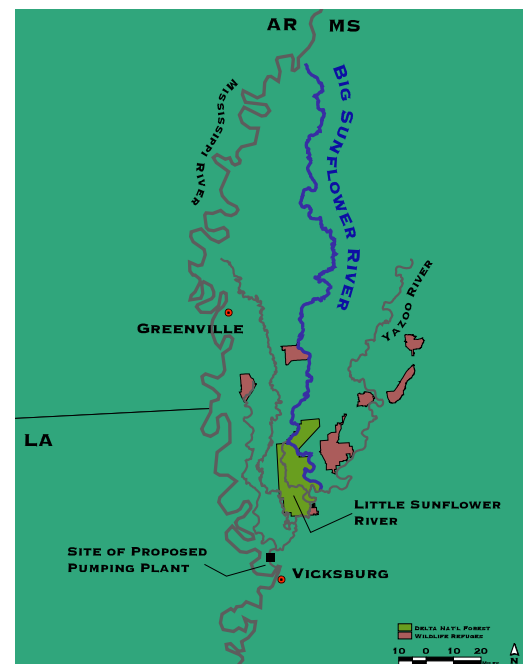
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FEDERAL AND STATE LANDS
IN THE BIG SUNFLOWER
WATERSHED SUPPORT
DIVERSE RECREATIONAL
OPPORTUNITIES.

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR
TO TAKE ACTION:
[WWW.AMERICANRIVERS.ORG/
BIGSUNFLOWER2004.HTML](http://WWW.AMERICANRIVERS.ORG/BIGSUNFLOWER2004.HTML)



#3 SNAKE RIVER

THREAT: FEDERAL DAMS

SUMMARY

Dams on the Columbia and lower Snake rivers have caused dramatic declines in the Snake River's once abundant wild salmon population, with all the river's runs either extinct or sliding toward extinction. Studies show that local economies would benefit from thousands of new jobs and hundreds of millions of new dollars if wild salmon were restored to the Snake River. However, unless the Bush administration delivers a credible plan to rebuild wild salmon populations, these economic opportunities will be lost and our generation could be the last to enjoy these legendary species.

THE RIVER

Originating in Yellowstone National Park, the Snake River arcs across southern Idaho before turning north along the Idaho-Oregon border. The river then enters Washington and flows west to the Columbia River. It is the Columbia's largest tributary, and once produced more salmon and steelhead than any other river in the Columbia basin.

When Lewis and Clark canoed the lower Snake River nearly 200 years ago, more than 2 million wild salmon and steelhead returned each year to spawn in the Snake and its tributaries. Four U.S. Army Corps of Engineers dams and 140 miles of slackwater behind those dams have replaced the free-flowing river Lewis and Clark traveled. These dams

create a hostile gauntlet of deadly turbines and warm, stagnant reservoirs full of hungry predators that have caused dramatic declines in the Snake River's salmon runs. It is now considered a good year if wild salmon returns reach 3 percent of their historical numbers. All the river's salmon runs are either extinct or threatened with extinction.

In 2003, only two sockeye salmon returned to Idaho's Redfish Lake, named after the sockeye's spawning color. Aided by recent cyclical improvements in ocean conditions, other wild Snake River salmon and steelhead are not as close to extinction as the sockeye, but those populations remain perilously small.

Despite the grim situation, there is still hope for wild Snake River salmon. Quality habitat awaits salmon upstream of the dams in the Snake River and in tributaries. Scientists estimate that the Snake River basin possesses roughly 70 percent of the salmon and steelhead restoration potential in the entire Columbia basin. Removing the lower Snake River dams would open up the salmon migration route between the sea and that quality habitat, and restore spawning beds.

THE RISK

Recent studies indicate that some farmed salmon contain high levels of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and other toxins, and should be eaten sparingly. Conversely, wild salmon — thanks to their diet — are much healthier to eat because they contain more heart-friendly Omega-3 oils and lower concentrations of chemicals. While wild Snake River salmon, protected under the Endangered Species Act, won't be a significant portion of many people's diet anytime soon, restoring major salmon-producing rivers like the Snake is key to ensuring that consumers have a sustainable source of wild salmon in the future.

Despite the fact that scientists believe that removing the four lower Snake River dams would be the surest and best way to recover wild salmon in the Snake River basin, the federal government's 2000 Federal Salmon Plan did not call for dam removal. Many of the plan's 200 actions have not been implemented and a federal court tossed it out in May of

WILD SNAKE RIVER SALMON CONTAIN HEALTHY OMEGA-3 OILS, BUT MOST RUNS ARE TOO DEPLETED FOR COMMERCIAL HARVEST. FARM RAISED SALMON MAY CONTAIN PCBs AND OTHER TOXIC CHEMICALS AND SHOULD BE EATEN SPARINGLY.

TIM PALMER

AMERICAN RIVERS IMAGE LIBRARY

2003, essentially deeming much of it wishful thinking.

SNAKE RIVER salmon are imperiled primarily because they must travel through eight dams on the Snake and Columbia rivers as they migrate to and from the ocean. The current Salmon Plan allows dams to kill up to 88 percent of migrating juvenile salmon. Scientists agree that the plan's reliance on transporting fish around the dams in trucks and barges will not lead to salmon recovery.

The goal of the 2000 Salmon Plan was only to prevent extinction. This falls far short of the vision of Northwest governors, who have called for recovering salmon to sustainable, harvestable levels that satisfy federal laws and American Indian fishing rights guaranteed by treaties.

Achieving abundant wild salmon runs would bolster local economies by adding a consistent sportfishing industry to the region. A rare salmon angling season in 2001 generated \$90 million in Idaho. Commercial and tribal fishing would also benefit. Restoration of Snake and Columbia river salmon runs could yield up to \$500 million per year in revenues to the region and support up to 25,000 additional family wage jobs.

The Army Corps estimates that in the event that the Snake River dams were removed, improved fishing would contribute as much as \$65.5 million to the regional economy and that recreation other than fishing would generate up to \$310.5 million per year.

THE 12-MONTH OUTLOOK

Under court order, the Bush administration must deliver a new salmon plan that satisfies the Endangered Species Act by mid-2004.

The Bush administration should deliver a plan that is grounded in science and takes the bold steps necessary to truly recover salmon. The administration should either call for the removal of the lower Snake River dams or provide evidence that recovery is possible without dam removal.

Congress should pass the Salmon Planning Act (H.R. 1097). The bill would allow lower Snake River dam removal to be considered on an equal basis with other options, and it would help local communities maximize the benefits of dam removal, while minimizing negative effects. The Salmon Planning Act currently has over 100 co-sponsors in the U.S. House of Representatives.



U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

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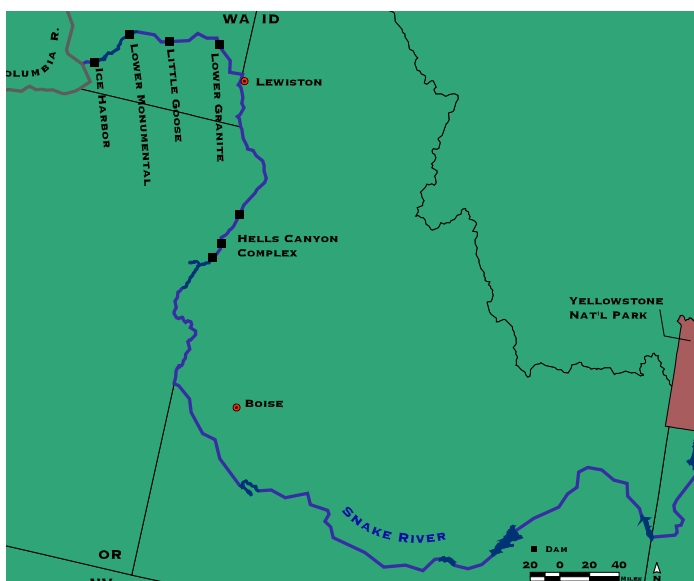
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THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION SHOULD DELIVER A CREDIBLE PLAN TO RESTORE WILD SNAKE RIVER SALMON RUNS TO LEVELS THAT SUPPORT RECREATIONAL AND COMMERCIAL HARVEST.

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO TAKE ACTION:
WWW.AMERICANRIVERS.ORG/SNAKE2004.HTML



#4 TENNESSEE RIVER

THREAT: INADEQUATE SEWER SYSTEMS

SUMMARY

Along the length of the Tennessee River, overloaded wastewater systems discharge large amounts of inadequately treated sewage into the river with distressing regularity. Unless the Bush administration holds these sewer systems accountable — and Congress provides financial assistance — the Tennessee River will continue to be deluged with sewage.

THE RIVER

The Tennessee River and its tributaries form the fifth largest river system in the United States, with a watershed covering 41,000 square miles. The Tennessee begins at the confluence of the Holston and the French Broad rivers in the heart of Knoxville, and then flows 652 miles through four states before it reaches the Ohio River at Paducah, Kentucky.

Like most large river systems in America, the Tennessee River watershed has been intensively developed. Nine dams plug the river, generating electricity and supporting commercial navigation from the Ohio River all the way to Knoxville. According to the U.S. Public Interest Research Group (PIRG), more than three million pounds of toxic substances were discharged into Tennessee waters in 2000.

Despite the abuse, the Tennessee River watershed is one of the most biologically diverse river systems in North America. According to the World Wildlife Fund, the Tennessee River and its tributaries are home to 125 species of freshwater mussels, 96 species of snails, and an astonishing 319 species of fish — including the legendary snail darter.

THE RISK

Suburban sprawl and urban decay clash along the length of the Tennessee River, and the public is the loser as millions of gallons of raw or partially treated sewage are accidentally or deliberately discharged into the river each year.

For example, 1 million gallons of raw sewage poured into the river in January and

February, 2002 near Sheffield, Ala., after a pipe in the river burst during heavy rains.

City officials acknowledged that the city's wastewater infrastructure has been neglected for decades, with some pipes dating to the 19th century, and at least one made from wood. A few months later, torrential rains in Chattanooga, Tenn. overloaded the sewer system there, flushing raw sewage into area streets, where it created a health menace for area residents before flowing into the river, untreated.

Unfortunately, such incidents are common all along the river, and they occur most often in Knoxville. Within the past three years, the Knoxville Utility Board has violated Clean Water Act sewage regulations some 1,000 times, dumping more than 1 billion gallons of raw or partially treated sewage into the river and streams in Knoxville. A portion of this dumped sewage results from permits illegally issued by the state of Tennessee that allow bypassing, a flagrant violation of the Clean Water Act. The Knoxville Utility Board is facing Clean Water Act lawsuits from conservationists, the city, the state, and the federal government for its sewage discharges into the river.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that exposure to sewage-laced water makes as many as 3.5 million Americans sick each year. Germs found in sewage cause minor gastrointestinal illness and respiratory infections as well as potentially



CHATTANOOGAFLUN.COM

RIGHT: OVERLOADED SEWER SYSTEMS SEND ALARMING AMOUNTS OF SEWAGE INTO THE TENNESSEE RIVER EVERY YEAR.



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life threatening illnesses like hepatitis and dysentery.

State efforts to address pollution in the river have lagged. PIRG reports that in 2002 the state of Tennessee ranked third in the nation, behind Utah and Texas, for the percentage of its sewage and industrial facilities falling into the “significant non-compliance” category under Clean Water Act obligations. Fish consumption advisories in 2000 totaled 17 in Tennessee, 13 in Alabama and six in Kentucky.

THE 12-MONTH OUTLOOK

In almost every instance, the difference between clean and sewage-laced water comes down to enforcing the law and providing the necessary funding. Two important decisions will be made in Washington, D.C. during the next 12 months that will determine whether the federal government will be part of the solution or part of the problem.

For fiscal year 2005, the White House has again proposed to slash the amount of money in the “State Revolving Loan Funds” that EPA provides to local communities to improve their sewage and drinking water treatment plants. The administration asked Congress to appropriate only \$850 million, a reduction of almost half a billion dollars from current spending levels for this necessary program. Congress should reject these proposed cuts and increase funding for the effort to \$3.2 billion instead.

In November 2003, the Bush administration’s EPA proposed to legalize the wastewater utility practice of “blending” partially and fully treated sewage and dumping the mix into rivers when rain or melting snow stresses their capacity. The agency accepted public comments through Feb. 9, 2004, and could issue a final decision at any time. Diluting sewage before dumping it is not an acceptable approach to protecting public health – germs breed in water. EPA should withdraw the proposal.

The Knoxville Utility Board should stop adding new sewer connections to its sewage collection system, particularly those with chronic overflows, until they conduct the necessary repairs to sewer lines, pump stations, sewage treatment plants, and other parts of their sewer collection system to fully comply with the terms and conditions of the Clean Water Act.



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CHILDREN AND THE ELDERLY ARE MOST VULNERABLE TO GERMS IN UNTREATED SEWAGE. ILLNESSES RANGE FROM MILD RESPIRATORY INFECTIONS TO FATAL CASES OF DYSENTERY AND HEPATITIS.

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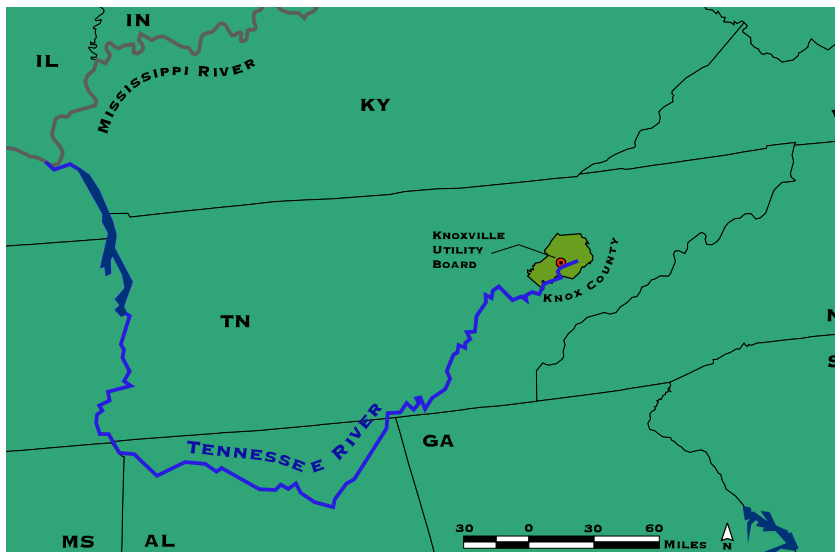
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WWW.AMERICANRIVERS.ORG/TENNESSEE2004.HTML



#5 ALLEGHENY AND MONONGAHELA RIVERS

THREAT: POLLUTED DRAINAGE FROM ABANDONED COAL MINES

SUMMARY

Thousands of abandoned mines are leaking acid and other toxic substances into streams throughout the coal country of western Pennsylvania and West Virginia. Unless Congress reauthorizes the Abandoned Mine Land Trust Fund, ongoing efforts to treat this problem will cease and the amount of pollution reaching the Allegheny and Monongahela rivers will increase, threatening 42 public drinking water intakes, thousands of private wells, and fish and wildlife.

THE RIVERS

The Allegheny and Monongahela rivers drain most of western Pennsylvania, and they merge in downtown Pittsburgh to form the Ohio River. Originating near the New York-Pennsylvania state border, the Allegheny runs north to south. After an 86-mile reach protected as a federal Wild and Scenic River, the Allegheny passes through a series of nine Army Corps of Engineers locks and dams before meeting the Monongahela. The Monongahela runs south to north, starting in West Virginia's mountains, and flowing through farmland and small towns before entering Pittsburgh.

These rivers were workhorses of early American industrialization. Coal-laden barges serving steel mills regularly traveled on both of them. With the decline of the domestic steel industry, many mills closed. Pittsburgh, how-

ever, remains a major inland port, handling 53 million tons of cargo each year. In addition, the waterways are now emerging as increasingly important recreational resources, attracting more than six million tourists annually.

THE RISK

The Allegheny-Monongahela watershed contains the greatest concentration of abandoned coal mine sites in the nation. In working mines, miners pump out groundwater that would otherwise fill the shafts where they work. When the mines are abandoned, the pumps are shut off and the mines slowly fill with water that leaches acid and toxic materials from the coal left in the seam. Eventually, contaminated water fills the mine and "abandoned mine drainage" (AMD) begins to seep out into the streams and rivers.

Pennsylvania leads the nation in the amount of polluted drainage seeping or flowing from abandoned mines. Half of the Pennsylvania portion of the Allegheny-Monongahela watershed has been assessed for water quality, and already 2,188 miles of rivers and streams have been classified as impaired due to mine drainage. Many tributaries run orange, blue or white because seepage and runoff from abandoned mines carry high concentrations of heavy metal wastes, such as iron, aluminum and manganese. It has been estimated that it will cost \$780 million to clean up abandoned mines in western Pennsylvania.

On the Allegheny, Monongahela and Ohio rivers in Pennsylvania there are 42 public drinking water intakes, and each is vulnerable to pollution threats from AMD. Other human impacts include damage to thousands of private wells and shrinking property values. AMD can also cause fish kills, wipe out aquatic insects and destroy aquatic habitat. It jeopardizes recreational activities such as fishing, boating and park use along the Allegheny, Monongahela and Ohio rivers, uses that have been valued at nearly \$115 million dollars annually.

Coal mining was largely unregulated until 1977, and most owners of defunct mines have long since disappeared. Of the nearly 1,200 abandoned coal mines in the West Virginia portion of the Allegheny-Monongahela watershed, only 11 mines are served by water treatment projects. Many of the untreated mines are filling with water and will soon send additional AMD into surface water. The management and maintenance of existing and future water treat-



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THE ALLEGHENY AND MONONGAHELA RIVERS COME TOGETHER IN PITTSBURGH AFTER DRAINING THE COAL COUNTRY OF WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA AND WEST VIRGINIA.



U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

ment operations at bankrupt and abandoned mining operations hinges on congressionally appropriated funding.

THE 12-MONTH OUTLOOK

Pennsylvania Governor Edward Rendell proposed a major bond initiative for environmental restoration in January 2004. If approved, the state would borrow \$800 million for abandoned mine cleanup, open space protection, clean energy, and other uses.

The Pennsylvania legislature should vote to put the bond on the ballot for voters to ratify in November 2004.

The federal Abandoned Mine Land Trust

Fund pays for cleanup efforts at many abandoned mine sites.

This program collects monies from operating coal mines to fund reclamation and treatment projects at closed mines.

The fund currently has a balance — but it will expire on Sept. 30,

2004. If allowed to lapse, the loss of funding would hobble efforts by states such as Pennsylvania and West Virginia to reclaim abandoned coal mines and protect water in the Allegheny-Monongahela watershed, and rivers like the Allegheny and Monongahela would be devastated by mine drainage indefinitely.

Congress should reauthorize the coal industry's contribution to the fund before this happens, and make certain that monies in the fund are directed toward water quality problems caused by AMD.

Even if the Abandoned Mine Land Trust Fund is reauthorized, it may not generate enough funds to thoroughly address AMD damage. Thousands of mine cleanups are required, each lasting up to 50 years. Congress should do more than reauthorize the existing program — it should increase the amount of funding available for cleanups and reform the process for allocating money to ensure that more cleanups are completed more quickly.

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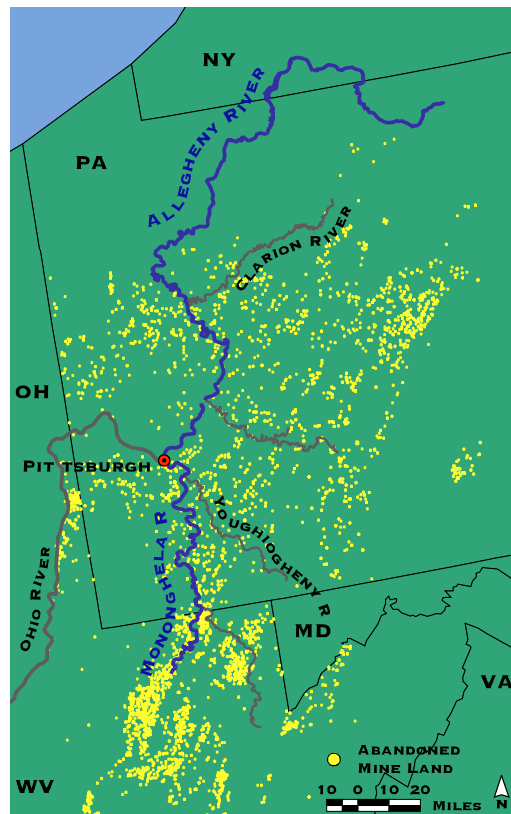
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KEITH PITZER, Friends of the Cheat River, (304) 329-3621, kpitzer@cheat.org

COUNTLESS HEADWATER STREAMS IN THE WATERSHED ARE DISCOLORED BY ACID AND TOXIC HEAVY METALS LEAKING OUT OF ABANDONED MINES (LEFT).

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO TAKE ACTION: WWW.AMERICANRIVERS.ORG/ALLEGHENYMONONGAHELA2004.HTML



#6 SPOKANE RIVER

THREAT: WATER WITHDRAWALS AND POLLUTION

SUMMARY

More pollution concentrated in less water will be the future of the Spokane River unless new groundwater withdrawal applications are rejected, sewage plants meet stringent water quality standards, and mine waste is cleaned up.

THE RIVER

The Spokane River flows from Lake Coeur d'Alene in northern Idaho approximately 90 miles northwest through Spokane, Wash., before emptying into the Columbia River above Grand Coulee Dam. Much of the river's flows, particularly during summer, come from underground springs fed by the Spokane-Rathdrum Aquifer. The importance of this aquifer to the river and the region is hard to overstate. It also provides drinking water to 400,000 people in the Spokane area, and is liberally pumped by irrigators in Idaho, and industrial and municipal users in Washington.

For 10,000 years, native peoples gathered at

ery, whitewater recreation and dramatic, natural scenery.

THE RISK

Spokane Falls, the city's signature natural feature, sputters and runs dry most summers, a consequence of over-pumping the Spokane-Rathdrum Aquifer, the operations of Avista Corporation's Post Falls Dam, and diverting the river above the falls to Avista's Spokane power plant.

Every gallon pumped out of the Spokane-Rathdrum Aquifer is one less gallon that reaches the river. Water users are authorized to pump more than 620 million gallons per day from the aquifer, a figure that exceeds the river's recent daily flow during summer.

State agencies in Idaho and Washington that manage the aquifer have carelessly deeded water to cities, farmers and industry without adequately assessing ecological impacts on the river. This generosity has fueled wasteful habits — per capita water use in the region is among the highest in the nation.

Shrinking river flows exacerbate another serious problem: five sewage treatment plants discharge into the river. Low flows concentrate the wastewater discharges, making it difficult for utilities to avoid violating water quality standards. Rather than upgrade their facilities, these utilities are seeking exemptions from regulations.

The final insult to the Spokane River is toxic pollution flowing from the area around Lake Coeur d'Alene. Former mining and lead smelting operations there have contaminated the river with heavy metals, including lead, arsenic, zinc, and cadmium that cause health problems, including brain and nerve damage in children. High pollution levels have prompted fish consumption warnings in Washington. In 1999, the Spokane River carried mine waste including 400 tons of lead and other metals and arsenic to the Columbia River.

In 2002, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a Superfund cleanup plan for the Spokane River-Lake Coeur d'Alene basin. The contaminated lake, the river's source, is not in the plan. The Bush administration transferred effective control of the



THE SPOKANE RIVER: TOO LITTLE WATER, TOO MUCH POLLUTION, AND AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE

a magnificent set of falls and rapids to catch salmon and trade with their neighbors. In the 1870s, the river's abundant water and energy potential attracted new settlers to this spot. Today, the Spokane River is a vital part of the quality of life in its namesake city, offering riverfront trails and parks, a prized trout fish-

cleanup to Idaho, which opposes the designation and the cleanup because of costs, opposition by mining interests, and because local business leaders fear negative publicity for the area's real estate and tourism industry centered on Lake Coeur d'Alene. Continued funding is in doubt due to shortfalls in the federal Superfund program that is supposed to help pay for the project.

THE 12-MONTH OUTLOOK

Idaho and Washington are determining future pumping levels for the Spokane-Rathdrum Aquifer, and will release final plans in 2004. Simultaneously, the states are working with the U.S. Geological Survey to study the aquifer and river. The states should enact a moratorium on new aquifer pumping until the study is concluded, and include stringent conservation provisions in forthcoming aquifer management plans.

The Washington Department of Ecology will issue a river cleanup plan in 2004, establishing

standards to address low oxygen levels in the river. At the same time, the Bush administration has signaled that it may greatly reduce the federal role in this important Clean Water Act

program. Washington state and the federal government should continue to work together to reduce polluted runoff in the Spokane River.

Spokane River sewage dischargers are seeking exemptions from water quality standards that protect spawning conditions for trout. Their tool to accomplish this is a Clean Water Act provision called "use attainability analysis." If accepted, the exemptions will allow sewage to be dumped more liberally, and trout survival is less likely. Public hearings about the exemption requests will be held in late 2004 and in 2005. The Washington Department of Ecology and the federal EPA must reject these requests from sewage dischargers.

In the 2004 session of Congress, lawmakers should reinstate the Superfund Tax on oil and chemicals that provides funds to clean up toxic sites like the Spokane River. This "polluter



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pays" funding source expired in 1995, leading to the current funding crisis for the program.

Despite opposition from President Bush, Congress should reauthorize the tax to ensure that cleanup of the Spokane River and other sites nationwide goes forward — and polluters rather than taxpayers pay for cleanup.

FIVE SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANTS ALONG THE SPOKANE RIVER ARE SEEKING EXEMPTIONS FROM CLEAN WATER STANDARDS.

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#7 HOUSATONIC RIVER

THREAT: MASSIVE PCB POLLUTION

SUMMARY

Irresponsible industrial activity has left the floodplain and river bottom of the Housatonic River contaminated with some of the highest levels of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) in the nation. People who consume contaminated fish and wildlife from along the river are at elevated risk for cancer, birth defects, and immune problems. Unless the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) orders a cleanup of the remaining contamination, General Electric Company's (GE) toxic legacy in the Housatonic will remain a major health hazard for generations to come.

THE RIVER

The Housatonic River flows 149 miles from its source in western Massachusetts through western Connecticut before emptying into a large tidal estuary and Long Island Sound. Along its route the river passes through October Mountain State Forest, Massachusetts's largest state park. The Housatonic supports 45 species of fish and amphibians as well as numerous rare and endangered species including bald eagles.

For 200 years, the Housatonic has provided water and hydropower for paper, manufacturing, iron ore and marble industries, as well as for agriculture. Despite warnings against consuming fish caught in the river, the Housatonic is a popular destination for trout fishing, boating, camping and swimming.

ALTHOUGH THE HOUSATONIC RIVER REMAINS A POPULAR RECREATIONAL DESTINATION, PEOPLE CONSUMING FISH AND WATERFOWL FROM THE RIVER CAN BE UP TO 1,000 TIMES MORE LIKELY TO BE STRICKEN WITH CANCER AND OTHER MALADIES.

THE RISK

Between 1932 and 1977, GE used PCBs at its electric transformer manufacturing plant in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. During that time, GE either deliberately or accidentally discharged or dumped many tons of PCBs into the river, nearby lakes, groundwater, and onto soils and landfills. The GE facility is the only known source of these chemicals entering the Housatonic in the state.

PCBs cause a wide range of human health problems, often at low levels of exposure.

EPA classifies PCBs as a probable human carcinogen. Other studies link PCBs to developmental and neurological disorders and endocrine disruptions.

Estimates on the amount of PCBs contaminating the river and surrounding area vary. GE has acknowledged discarding almost 20 tons of PCBs into the river. The Housatonic River Initiative, citing information provided by a former GE employee, pegs the number at close to 750 tons. The most severe concentrations of the chemical — among the highest in the nation — are found in the sediment at the bottom of the river between the Pittsfield facility and Woods Pond Dam about 10 miles downstream. Although this dam has prevented large quantities of PCBs from moving further downstream, the river contains dangerous levels of PCBs below the dam all the way to its mouth.

PCBs do not dissolve in water; they sink to the bottom and enter the food chain through plants and bottom-feeding species. Ducks taken from the most polluted section of the Housatonic contain PCB levels rarely seen anywhere else in the world. Average PCB concentrations in these waterfowl are more than 200 times EPA's tolerance level for human consumption, and their carcasses must be handled as hazardous waste. One duck registered a PCB count of 3,700 parts per million, more than 1,000 times the EPA limit.

EPA also concluded that certain popula-



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EPA



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tions of invertebrates, amphibians, fish-eating mammals and birds are all at high risk in certain areas of the river, especially above the dam. Fish in the river have some of the highest PCB levels in the nation, and EPA laboratory studies indicate that as many as 50 percent of them have developed abnormalities.

In 1977, the Connecticut Department of Public Health issued advisories for the consumption of fish from the Housatonic. A similar warning followed in Massachusetts five years later, and in 1999 that state added an advisory about consuming Housatonic waterfowl.

The EPA found that people consuming Housatonic River fish and waterfowl, especially above the dam, are up to 1,000 times more likely to be stricken with cancer and other maladies, such as reproductive problems. In 1997, the federal government sued GE, and the settlement led to cleanup of the half-mile stretch of the Housatonic immediately alongside the Pittsfield factory. This was completed in 2002. GE is also required to help pay for cleanup on the next 1.5 miles of river below the factory site.

THE 12-MONTH OUTLOOK

In the coming months, EPA will take major steps towards determining how much, if any, of the remaining PCB contamination in the rest of the Housatonic River to clean up.

Before making this decision, EPA will complete three scientific analyses: The first report discusses the effects of the river's PCBs on human health, the second looks at PCB impacts to fish and wildlife, and the third examines whether river flow and weather could cause the contamination to "migrate" to new areas. EPA should finalize these reports by the end of 2004.

Once these reports are completed, GE will present the agency with six alternatives for addressing the remaining contamination — ranging from doing nothing to dredging the entire river. EPA should insist on a cleanup of the rest of the river sufficient to enable residents to once again hunt and fish without fear of adverse impacts to their health.

Congress should pass the Clean Water Authority Restoration Act in the 2004 session to end lingering debate over what waters are and aren't protected by federal law. This would ensure that all tributaries and wetlands along the Housatonic will continue to be pro-



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tected as they have been since the Clean Water Act became law in 1972.

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DUCKS TAKEN FROM THE MOST POLLUTED SECTION OF THE HOUSATONIC CONTAIN PCB LEVELS REACHING MORE THAN 200 TIMES EPA'S BENCHMARK FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION. THEIR CARCASSES MUST BE HANDLED AS HAZARDOUS WASTE.

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO TAKE ACTION:
WWW.AMERICANRIVERS.ORG/HOUSATONIC2004.HTML



#8 PEACE RIVER

THREAT: PHOSPHATE MINING

SUMMARY

Phosphate mining in the Peace River watershed has been the source of serious environmental problems for many years, and large new mines are planned. Florida's Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) must take measures to safeguard the river and communities in the watershed from mining impacts, including protecting drinking water, and important tourism and commercial fishing industries.

THE RIVER

The Peace River begins in central Florida at Green Swamp and flows south 105 miles to the Charlotte Harbor Estuary. Fresh water from the Peace River is vital to maintain the delicate salinity balance in the estuary that hosts several endangered species as well as commercial and recreational harvests of shrimp, crabs and fish.

The river has always been a vital resource to the people in its watershed. Historically, the abundant fishery and wildlife supported Native American populations. Today, the Peace is an important source of drinking water, supplying some 6 million gallons of

drinking water every day. The river is also an important source of economic vitality, providing tourism, recreation, and commercial fishing. During 1995-1996, these industries generated almost \$4.5 billion and created more than 91,000 jobs in the watershed.

THE RISK

Phosphate is a growing export to China, where it is used in fertilizer, but the consequences of mining it are borne in the Peace River watershed. Phosphate mining companies bore and scrape huge pits up to 60 feet deep over thousands of contiguous acres. More than 180,000 acres have been mined in the Peace River watershed already, and mining corporations are now seeking permits for another 100,000 acres – an expansion of more than 50 percent.

One byproduct of the extraction process is clay, which is stored in settling ponds that eventually comprise more than 40 percent of a mine site. Some of these ponds can measure thousands of acres. Rain is trapped in these massive clay-laden ponds rather than soaking into the soil to replenish underlying aquifers. This reduces flows in the Peace River. Since the 1960s, the average annual flow of the middle Peace River has declined from 1,350 cubic feet per second (cfs) to 800 cfs. Most of this flow reduction is due to phosphate mining.

Each holding pond is a potential time bomb that threatens water quality, public health, wildlife and the regional economy. Dams restraining the ponds have burst or overflowed, sending a slurry of clay, containing uranium and radium, into the river, and coating the riverbed for many miles with a toxic clay slime that suffocates flora and fauna. One such incident killed 3 million fish. In 1971, two million gallons of phosphate waste swept into the river, causing a five-foot tide of slime that spread into adjacent pastures and wetlands. On some occasions, clay slime spills have prevented the Peace River Manasota Water Supply Authority from using river flows for drinking water, forcing counties to seek water supplies elsewhere or rely on stored supplies.

On at least 24 occasions, heavy rains have created sinkholes beneath the settling ponds.



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HUGE PHOSPHATE MINES ARE DEVOURING THE PEACE RIVER WATERSHED, LEAVING BEHIND UNSTABLE CLAY POOLS THAT PREVENT WATER FROM REACHING THE RIVER — UNTIL THEY COLLAPSE.



ENVIRONMENTAL PR GROUP

This caused the floor of the ponds to collapse, allowing mine waste to be released into underground aquifers.

THE 12-MONTH OUTLOOK

On May 10, 2004, a judge will examine the Florida DEP's decision to allow IMC-Cargill to expand the Ona Mine by 4,000 acres. The company has signaled that it may expand the site by an additional 16,000 acres beyond that at some point in the future. Charlotte County, the Peace River Manasota Water Supply Authority and conservation groups are challenging the DEP's permit for the mine. It appears DEP is poised to allow mine construction, despite the fact that an Environmental Impact Statement has not been completed for this project. DEP should reject the Ona Mine.

Charlotte County and conservation groups are challenging or monitoring at least five other phosphate mine proposals. These proposed mines and mine expansions total over 40,000 acres. DEP should deny permits for each of them.

After a three-year delay, SWFWMD is scheduled to set new minimum flow levels for the middle and lower Peace River in 2004. The large number of pending mine permits and their consequences for flows make it imperative that SWFWMD set minimum flow levels without further delay. The district should set minimum flows in the Peace River that will preserve and protect drinking water and fish and wildlife habitat. If SWFWMD attempts additional stalling, the state legislature should mandate that the decision be made in 2004.

Most of the Peace River was listed under the Clean Water Act as an impaired river in 1998, and the DEP has agreed to develop a cleanup plan for the river. DEP should resist pressure from phosphate mining companies and establish clean water management requirements that will lead to improved water quality in the river.

The Bush administration has halted a Clinton-era initiative to strengthen the Total Maximum Daily Load program in the Clean Water Act and has signaled that it will propose weaker regulations. The administration should not dilute this program, which is the Clean Water Act's primary tool for cleaning up waters like the Peace that are impaired by development, mining, and other land uses that generate pollution.



CHARLOTTE COUNTY VISITOR'S BUREAU

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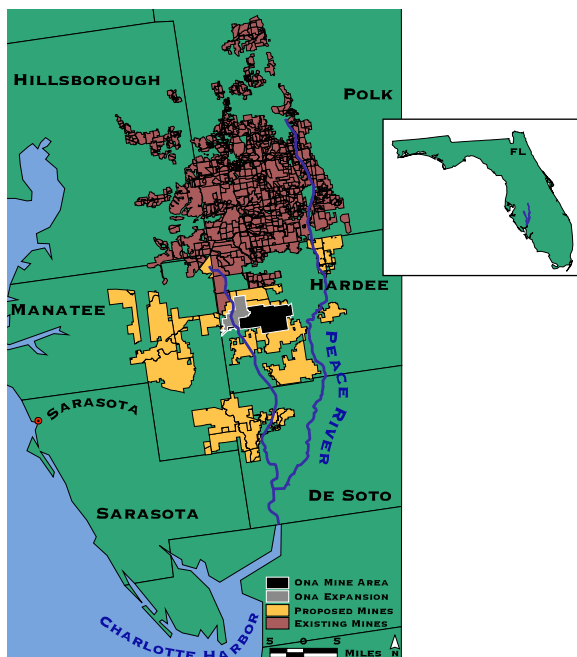
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PHOSPHATE MINING
THREATENS RECREATIONAL
AND COMMERCIAL FISHING
IN THE PEACE RIVER AND
CHARLOTTE HARBOR

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO TAKE ACTION:
WWW.AMERICANRIVERS.ORG/PEACE2004.HTML



#9 BIG DARBY CREEK

THREAT: RAPID, POORLY REGULATED SPRAWL

SUMMARY

Despite its close proximity to Columbus, Ohio, Big Darby Creek has managed to escape many impacts of urban sprawl. That may be about to change. Unless state and local governments adopt and enforce river-conscious land use planning in the Big Darby watershed, one of the highest quality streams left in the Midwest may become just another polluted, flood-prone urban ditch.

THE RIVER

The Big Darby Creek mainstem is approximately 88 miles long, draining 555 square miles of predominantly agricultural land in central Ohio before joining the Scioto River. The Big Darby system has been recognized as one of the outstanding rivers left in the Midwest. It has been designated as a state and national "Scenic River," and as one of The Nature Conservancy's original "Last Great Places."

Although most lands along the Big Darby are in private hands, several parks provide public access. The river is a popular destination for paddlers, anglers, scout troops and school outings from the greater Columbus area. More than 100 fish and 43 freshwater mussels species, including 37 rare and endangered aquatic species on Ohio's watch lists, have been identified in the Big Darby watershed. Three species protected under the federal Endangered Species Act call the Big Darby home.

THE RISK

Until recent years, agriculture buffered the Big Darby from sprawl, but skyrocketing property values threaten to transform the landscape. Although some farming practices present risks to the Big Darby, a more pressing concern is that population in the seven-county Columbus area is expected to explode by nearly 30 percent — some 600,000 people — by 2030. As a result, Columbus and other communities are rezoning agricultural land and entertaining proposals for massive residential development in the Darby watershed.

River conservationists across the country have identified poorly planned sprawl



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encroaching into sensitive areas as a leading concern. Once parking lots, roads, rooftops, and turf grass occupy a sufficient percentage of any given watershed, increased stormwater runoff ruins the natural dynamics of local streams. Rain and snow that once soaked into the ground race into storm drains instead — causing more floods and more pollution.

Columbus residents now drawn to the Big Darby for its scenery and tranquility could find their experience diminished by more pollution, trash on shorelines, unnaturally rising or falling flows, and traffic noise drowning out singing birds and rippling waters. The Big Darby's collection of rare and endangered mussels and fish are particularly vulnerable to the disruptions in natural flows that result from the dramatic changes in runoff associated with poorly planned sprawl.

The Bush administration has relaxed feder-



DARBY CREEK ASSOCIATION



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THE BIG DARBY IS ONE OF
THE HIGHEST QUALITY
STREAMS LEFT IN THE MID-
WEST — FOR NOW.

al safeguards that once helped protect rivers like the Big Darby from unregulated sprawl. In January 2002, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers issued a new set of "Nationwide Permits" that will make it easier and cheaper for developers to build residential subdivisions, shopping malls and institutional structures in floodplains and on top of wetlands and streams. Starting last year, field staff from the Army Corps and federal Environmental Protection Agency were discouraged from invoking Clean Water Act protections for certain classes of wetlands that absorb stormwater and filter pollutants that might otherwise flow into rivers like the Big Darby. Because most wetlands in the watershed have already been destroyed, those that do remain are especially necessary for flood control and water cleansing purposes.

These federal actions put more of the burden of protecting the Big Darby on the shoulders of state agencies and local governments — and real estate developers have a lot of clout in Ohio. According to the Center for Responsive Politics, the real estate industry is the state's third-most generous political contributor. Developers and growth boosters are pressuring the state to allow development in sensitive areas before thoughtful, protective planning can take place.

Should they prevail, the health and water quality of the Big Darby will decline, its wildlife will suffer, and area residents will lose the opportunity to enjoy a remarkable river, included in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, only 20 minutes from downtown Columbus.

THE 12-MONTH OUTLOOK

Recognizing the threats to the Big Darby, the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA) imposed a temporary development moratorium in June 2003 in a portion of the Big Darby watershed. The agency created a stakeholder group comprised of conservation groups, political leaders, government agencies, developers, and private utilities to recommend stream quality protection measures for the Big Darby. The stakeholder group will present their recommendations by the end of 2004, starting a formal period of public notice and comment.

These recommendations have the potential to include zoning, development limits and other land use guidelines that will protect the



DARBY CREEK ASSOCIATION

most crucial areas along the river, as well as steps to ensure that the construction which does occur uses "low impact development" techniques to minimize stormwater runoff to the Big Darby. Ohio EPA and the towns and counties in the watershed should act to make such a vision a reality.

In the 2004 session of Congress, lawmakers should put to rest lingering questions about what waters and wetlands are protected by federal law. Congress should pass the Clean Water Authority Restoration Act to ensure that remaining wetlands in the Big Darby watershed are protected.

MORE THAN 100 FISH AND 43 FRESHWATER MUSSEL SPECIES, INCLUDING 37 RARE AND ENDANGERED AQUATIC SPECIES ON OHIO'S WATCH LISTS HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED IN THE BIG DARBY WATERSHED. ABOVE IS THE FEDERALLY-ENDANGERED CLUBSHELL MUSSEL.

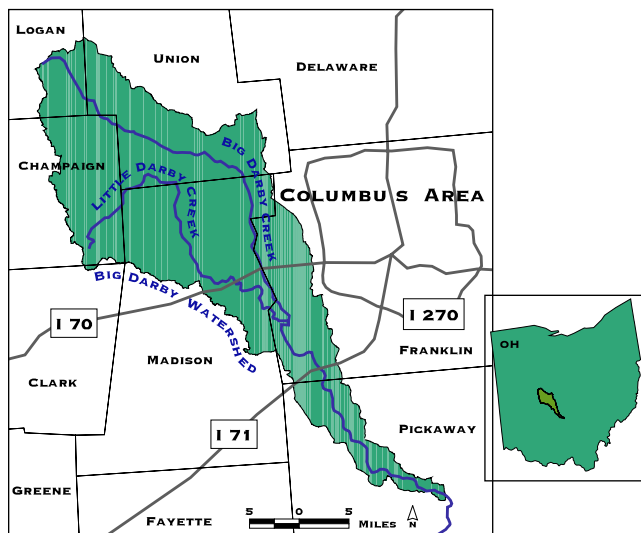
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MINNESOTA, WISCONSIN, ILLINOIS, IOWA, MISSOURI, KENTUCKY, TENNESSEE,
ARKANSAS, MISSISSIPPI, LOUISIANA

#10 MISSISSIPPI RIVER

THREAT: NAVIGATION INFRASTRUCTURE, LEVEES, AND POLLUTION

SUMMARY

After decades of manipulation by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Mississippi River is beset with problems. Unless Congress gives the agency marching orders that reflect the needs, desires and opportunities of today's communities, the river faces ecological collapse with vast negative economic impacts to tourism and recreation industries worth \$21 billion per year.

THE RIVER

On its journey from Minnesota to the Gulf of Mexico, the Mississippi River drains 41 percent of the continental United States, and carries more water than any other American river. The river also provides drinking water for millions of people.

The Mississippi is a cultural and recreational treasure for the nation. Tourism, fishing and recreation generate about \$21.4 billion each year, and contribute 351,000 jobs along the river. The river also supports a \$12.6 billion shipping industry, with 35,300 related jobs. Half the nation's corn and soybeans are barged on the Upper Mississippi.

The river and its floodplain support more than 400 different species of wildlife, and some 40 percent of North America's waterfowl migrate along the river's flyway.

THE RISK

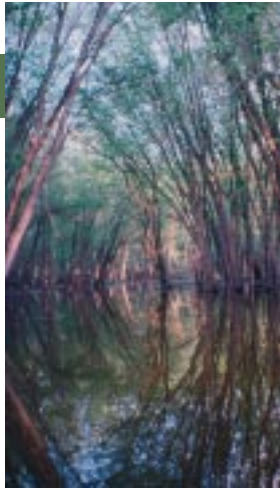
With its focus on managing the Mississippi for navigation and flood control, the Army Corps has profoundly altered almost everything about the river — its course, depth, flow, floodplain, and wildlife. Among the casualties: more than half the river's floodplain has been cut off by levees, millions of acres of wetlands and countless side channels and sandbars have been destroyed or damaged, the number of marsh plants at the base of the river's food chain have been reduced, sedimentation and erosion have increased, and fish and mussel habitat has been destroyed.

Riverside communities that look to tourism and recreation as key industries suffer as the river deteriorates.

Every year, more than 20 square miles of coastal wetlands near the river's mouth are lost because sediment that once nourished the Mississippi's delta is funneled through a tight corridor of Army Corps flood control levees into the Gulf of Mexico. Pollution from farms and sewage plants is also swept down the river where it contributes to an 8,000-square-mile "dead zone" in the Gulf of Mexico — an area that can't support marine life.

The Army Corps continues to undermine recovery efforts by pursuing more of the same types of projects that have caused wildlife extinctions and brought the river to the brink of ecological collapse. Even though less expensive and less environmentally damaging alternatives are available, the agency proposes to spend more than \$2 billion to replace or extend many of its 29 locks above St. Louis. Two separate findings by the National Academy of Sciences show that the agency's barge traffic forecasts for the river are grossly overstated and its economic models supporting the lock project are flawed.

Although billions of dollars have already been spent constructing flood control measures along the river, flood damages are on the rise — damages in 1993 alone exceeded \$12 billion. Now the Army Corps wants to spend and build more. One example, the proposed \$85 million St. Johns Bayou/New Madrid levee and pump project in southeastern Missouri, would wall off more than 75,000 acres



JON STRAVERS

THE ARMY CORPS WANTS TO
EXPAND ITS LOCKS
UPSTREAM OF ST. LOUIS,
WASTING BILLIONS OF TAX
DOLLARS AND FURTHER
JEOPARDIZING THE HEALTH
OF THE RIVER.



U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS



of floodplain along the river. The enormous earthen levees and dikes that line much of the river increase flood damages by inviting residences, businesses, and farms to locate in flood prone areas, and sever the vital connection to the river needed to sustain backwaters, forests, wetlands and the river's wildlife.

THE 12-MONTH OUTLOOK

This spring, the Senate will take up the Water Resources Development Act of 2004. In this bill, Congress will direct the Army Corps to either perpetuate or begin to fix problems afflicting the Mississippi River.

The Army Corps will likely try to have it both ways, presenting lawmakers with a multi-billion dollar, 30-year wish list for lock and dam renovations wrapped in a grand — but vague — commitment to restore the ecological functions of the Upper Mississippi River. The agency's economic justifications for longer locks have been thoroughly discredited. Congress should decline this wasteful expenditure, and authorize simpler, less-costly measures such as traffic scheduling and helper boats to relieve periodic lock congestion.

Congress should also direct the Army Corps to conduct a study to determine how to operate the existing lock and dam system to improve the ecological health of the river, and to develop a clear and binding plan to do so.

Congress should immediately fund the Lower Mississippi River Resources Assessment that will help to identify and prioritize restoration opportunities for the lower river. Congress should direct the Army Corps to immediately acquire and restore floodplain land, accelerate dam reforms to provide lower summer flows, and fund side channel restoration along the lower river. Congress also should urge the Army Corps to quickly complete a comprehensive delta restoration plan



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EARLY AND ADVANCED EROSION: LEVEES AT THE RIVER'S MOUTH HELP CAUSE MORE THAN 20 SQUARE MILES OF COASTAL WETLANDS TO DISAPPEAR EACH YEAR.

for coastal Louisiana, and that plan should be submitted to Congress.

Finally, Congress should enact long overdue reforms in Army Corps' project planning procedures. Among other key reforms, independent peer review of the economic and ecological assessments of large or controversial Army Corps projects should be required.

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO TAKE ACTION:
WWW.AMERICANRIVERS.ORG/MISSISSIPPI2004.HTML

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