

Office of Lt. Governor Pat Quinn

2005 Environmental Heroes

"The public policy of the state and the duty of each person is to provide and maintain a healthful environment for the benefit of this and future generations. Each person has the right to a healthful environment."

-Article XI – Environment of the Illinois Constitution

Joan Silke and the Good Neighbor Committee, a grassroots organization that successfully launched and won a court battle against the Clark Oil Refinery (now Premcor) in response to refinery explosions that spewed toxic chemicals in Blue Island and threatened the health of the community's residents. In November of 2005, 6,000 current and former Blue Island residents were awarded more than \$120 million in compensatory and punitive damages.

Dr. Rodney Alford of Kankakee, spotlighted and won repairs in an unsafe water and sewer system in Pembroke, that left unaddressed, would have sent raw sewage into the Beavers Creek which flows into the Kankakee River.

Ron Humbert of Lombard will be posthumously honored for his work to educate students about the ecological importance of amphibians and reptiles. Past President of the Chicago Herpetological Society, Humbert organized the first-ever statewide online election with thousands of students and citizens participating to elect Illinois' official state reptile (Painted Turtle) and amphibian (Eastern Tiger Salamander).

Judy & Gregg Sacotnik of Vermillion County organized 150 volunteers to participate in two river cleanups this past spring, removing 20 tons of debris.

Glen Schuetz of Venedy, is a retired landowner who has worked to improve the wildlife habitat in Washington County by installing wetlands, native season grasses, and bottomland forest seedlings.

Joanne Skoglund of Havana has been a tireless volunteer with Friends of the Illinois River and has worked to create the "Illinois River Sweep", an annual river cleanup reaching 30 communities in the Illinois River watershed. In 2005, more than 1,300 volunteers participated.

Larry Thorsen of Casey leads the Embarras Volunteer Stewards and donated 40 Saturdays a year to protecting Illinois' natural heritage.

The City of Naperville has had more than 1,000 residents and businesses invest in green power through its voluntary Renewable Energy Program since January 2005 – the estimated environmental benefit from each participant is equivalent to planting 181 trees.

The City of Peoria passed a landmark Stream Buffer Ordinance this year to protect the water quality of the Illinois River and control the sedimentation of the Peoria Lake.

The City of Rock Island unveiled Rain Gardens for Rock Island to encourage local property owners to develop rain gardens for at least five years. Dozens of new rain gardens have been planted to prevent flooding and improve water quality.

The Fox River Monitoring Network (Friends of the Fox River) of Crystal Lake is a volunteer water quality-monitoring program for the Fox River watershed. Friends of the Fox River has enlisted the assistance of more than 3,500 students, teachers, and adults to monitor stream sites annually.

The Southeast Environmental Task Force of Chicago, which focuses on open space, pollution prevention, and community outreach and education, won passage of an ordinance establishing a 20-year moratorium on landfills – enacted by the Chicago City Council in 2005.

GreenSolutions.il.gov