



Webinar

# Rivers of Opportunity

*25 Small and Mid-Size Cities*

*Adeptly Leveraging*

*Waterways*



**DEPAUL  
UNIVERSITY**

CHADDICK INSTITUTE FOR  
METROPOLITAN DEVELOPMENT



**Joseph Schwieterman, Ph.D.**

**William Kling, JD**

**Emily Hamilton**

Chaddick Institute at DePaul University

# DePaul University Team



Joseph P. Schwieterman, Ph.D.



William C. Kling, J.D.



Emily Hamilton

## Guest Presenters



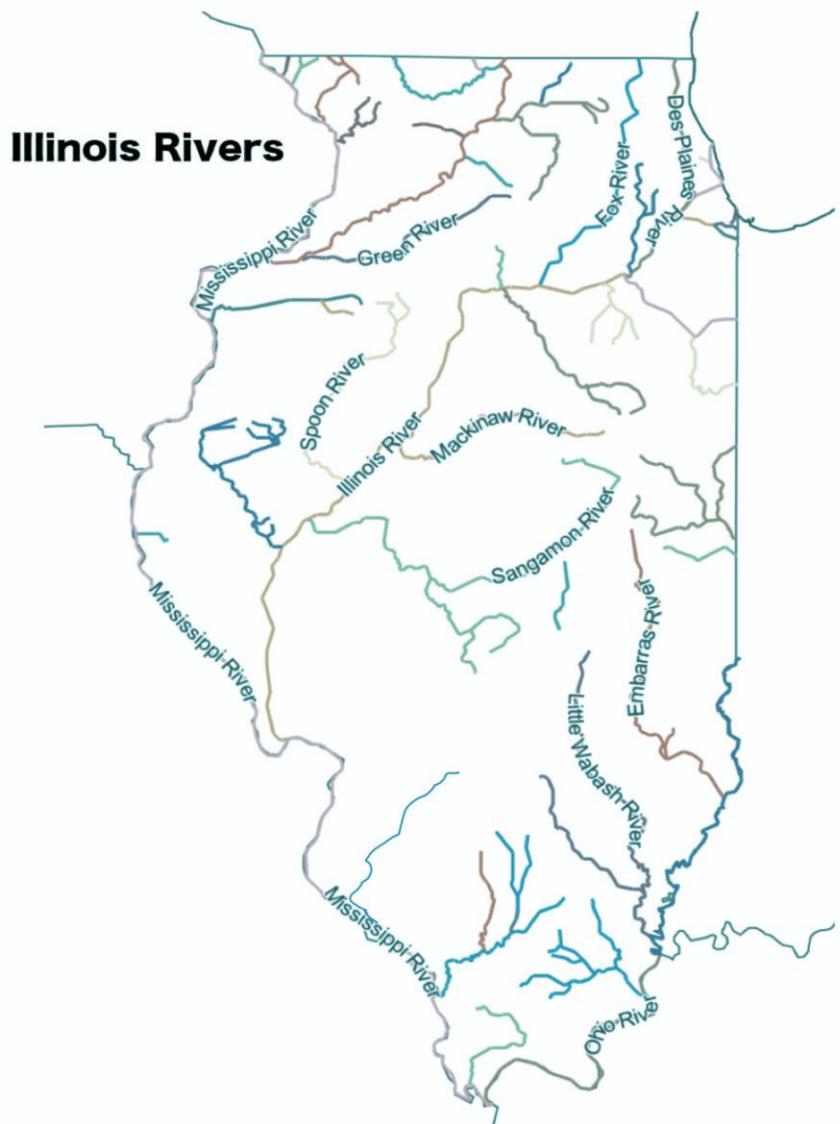
Dan Waldinger  
Director of Parks & Recreation  
Village of Mahomet.

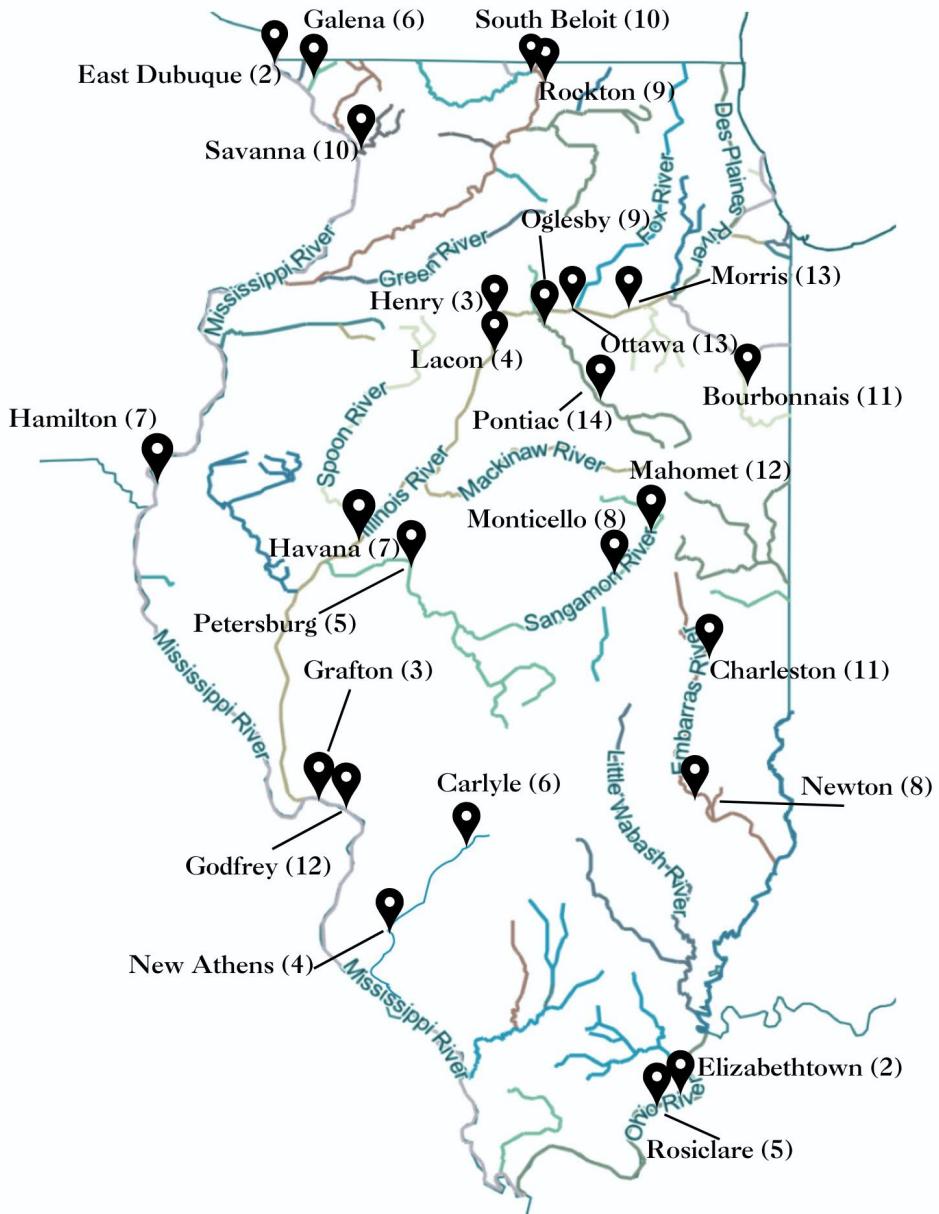


Brian “Fox” Ellis  
Director of Membership  
& Outreach  
Illinois Audubon Society



# Hydrology of Illinois Rivers



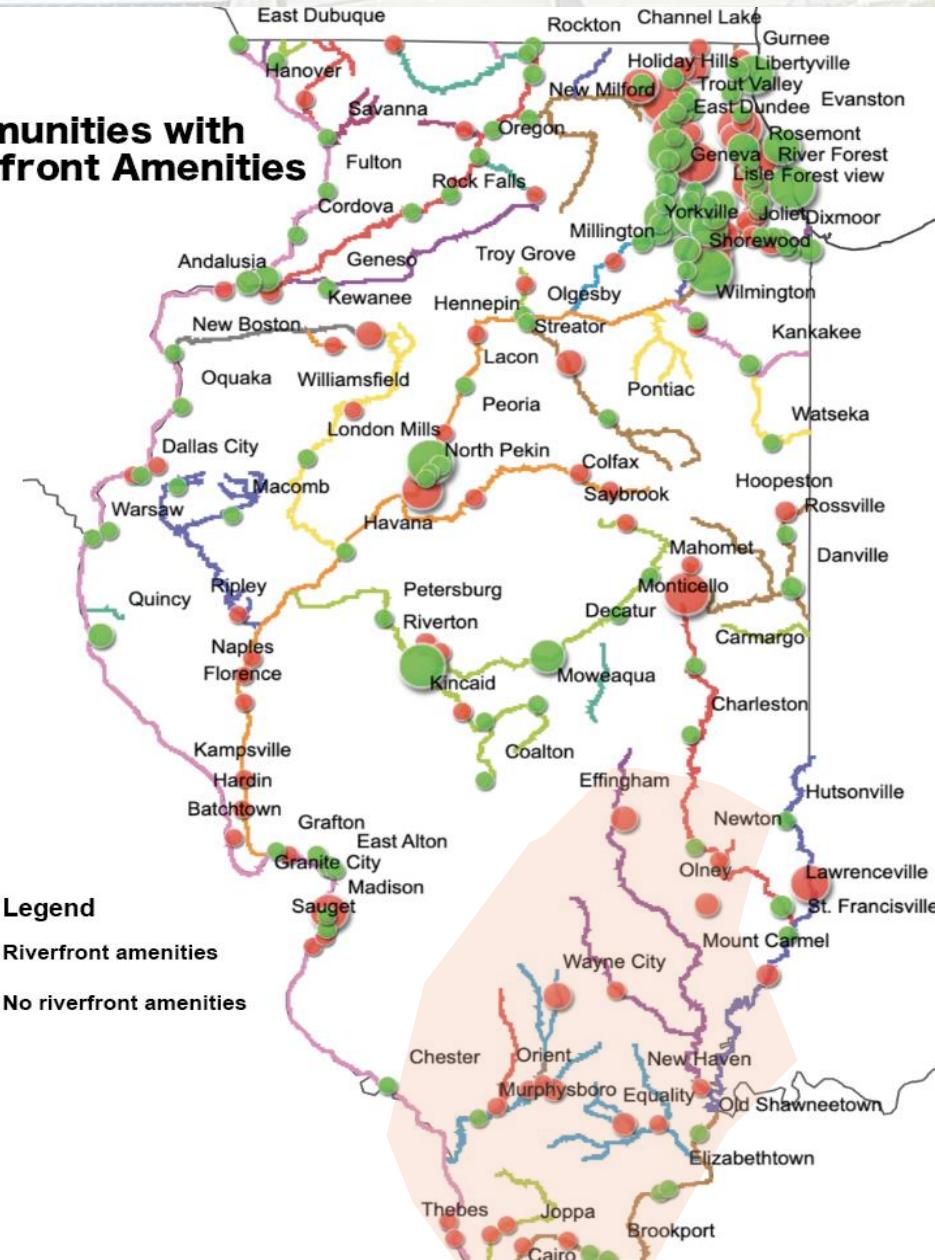


# Steps of Analysis

**1. Geographic Information System Analysis**

**2. Google Earth and Data Analysis**

## Communities with Riverfront Amenities



An aerial photograph of the city of Ottawa, Illinois. The image shows a dense urban area with a grid of streets and buildings. A large river, likely the Illinois River, flows through the city, with several bridges crossing it. In the center of the city, there is a large sports complex with a football field, a baseball field, and a swimming pool. The surrounding land is a mix of urban development and green fields. The image is taken from a high vantage point, providing a comprehensive view of the city's layout and natural features.

Ottawa, IL



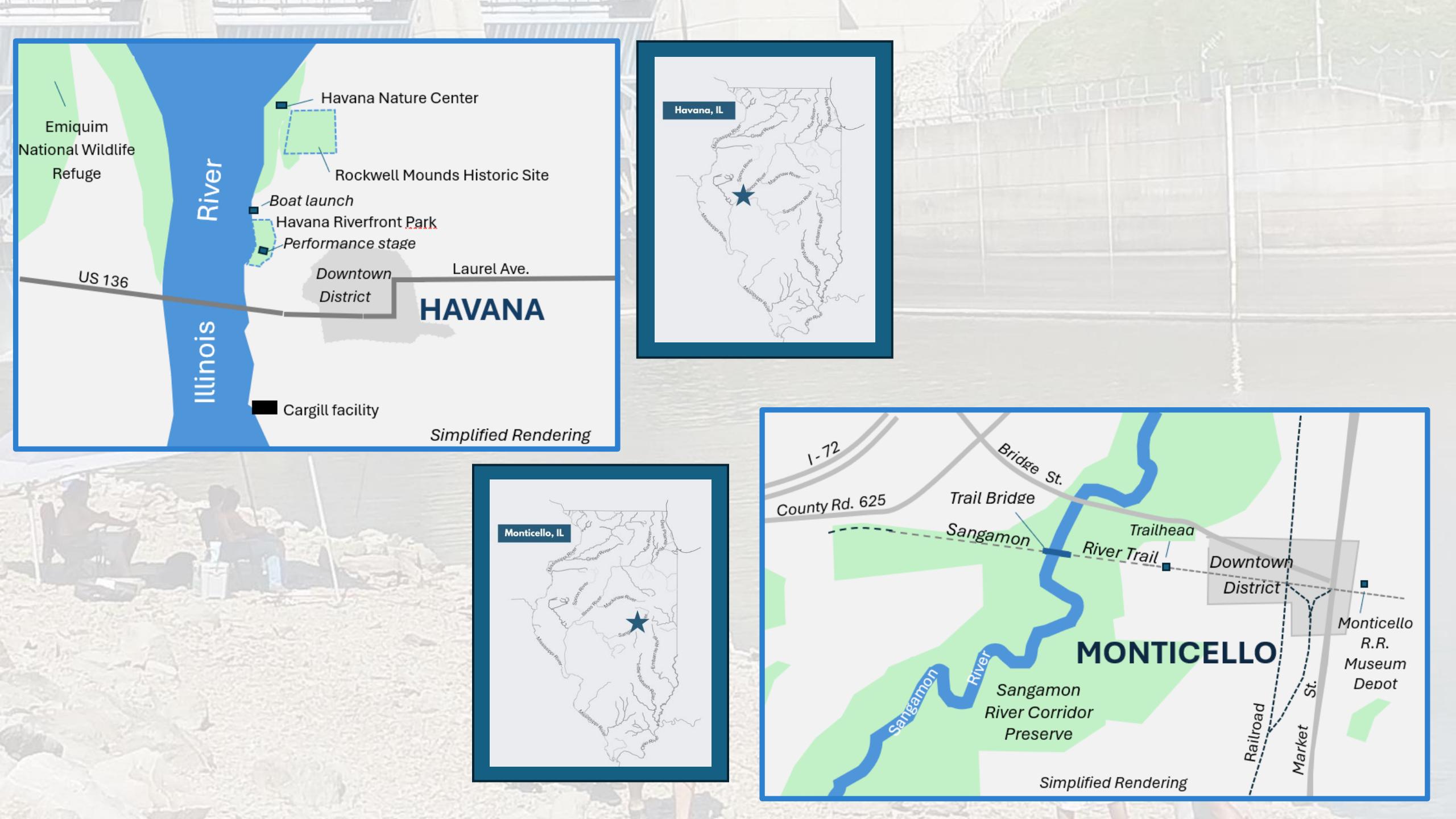
Grafton, IL

# Steps of Analysis

**3. Create Contact List**

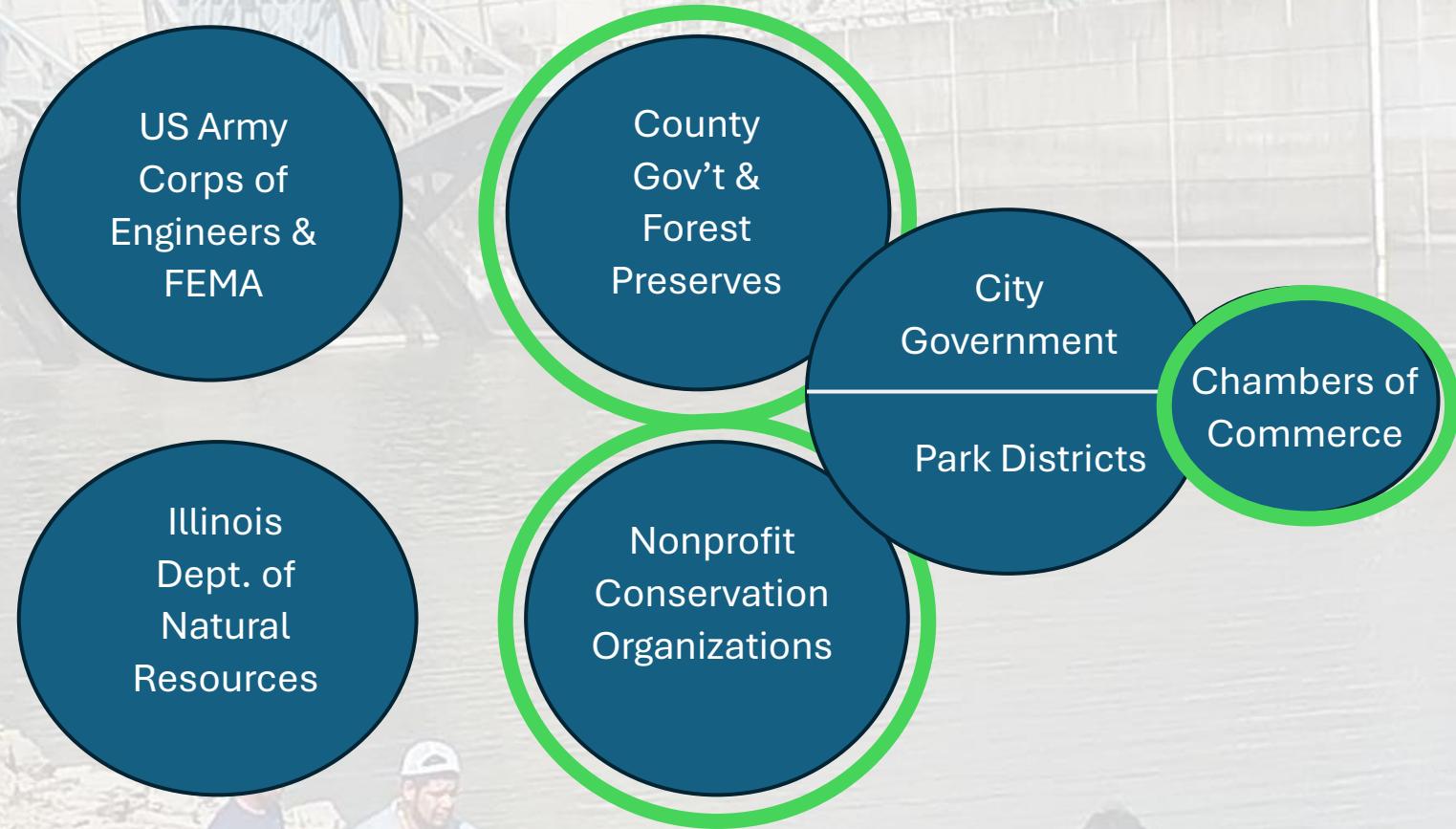
**4. Create Custom Maps & Fact-Checking**

**5. Site Visits**





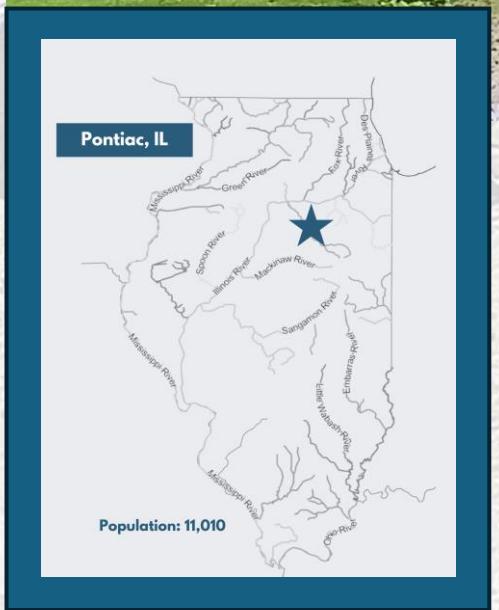
# Institutional Landscape of River Policymaking



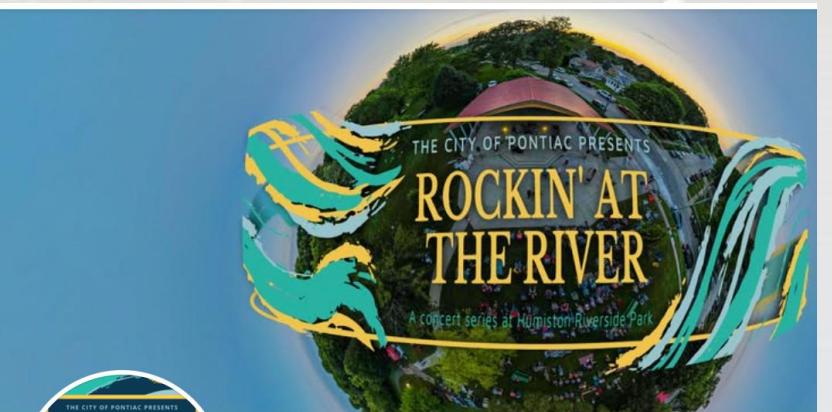
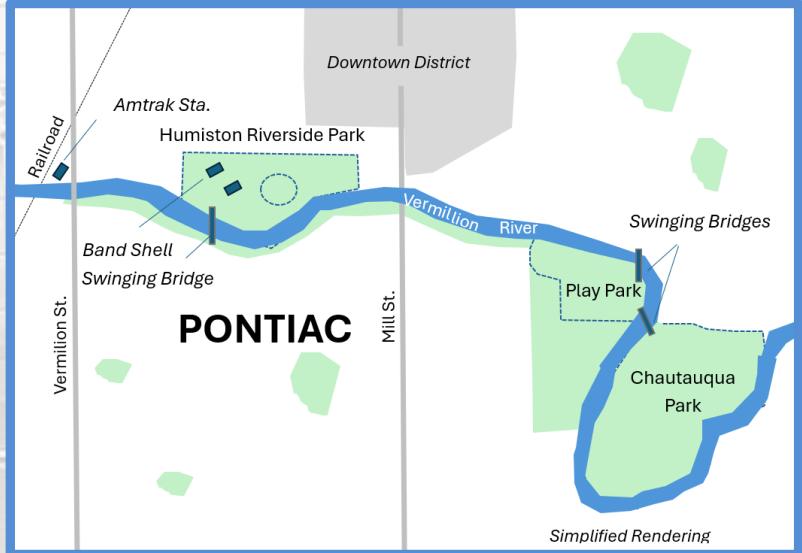
*Strongest Municipal Relationships*

# Key Takeaways

- **Recreational, cultural, and civic goals dominate** the efforts of Feature Communities, although economic development is a factor. Three-fourths have lost population since 2000.
- **Nearly all municipalities activate their riverfronts** through civic events, festivals, and club gatherings not directly focused on the river but use these natural assets as scenic backdrops.
- **Most successful communities have a strong** champion who sustains momentum from year to year. Few have comprehensive plans for their riverfronts. Most draw on the energy of civic groups.

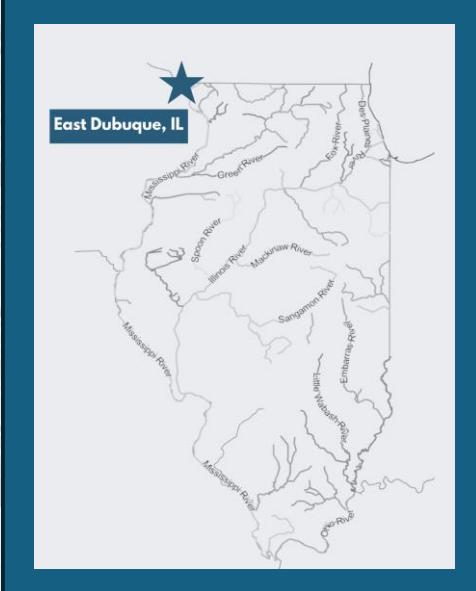


# Pontiac, IL

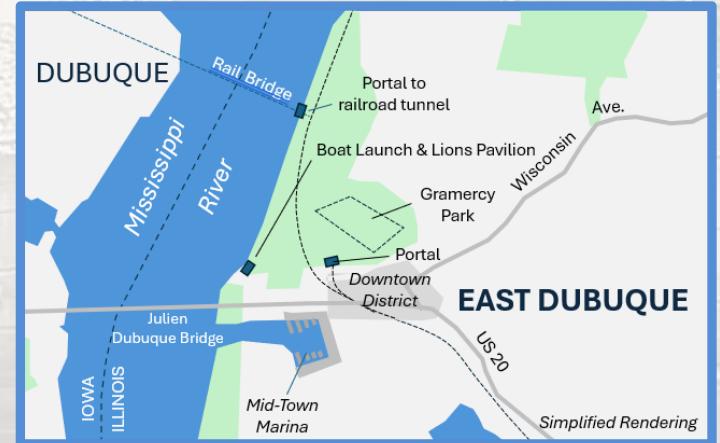


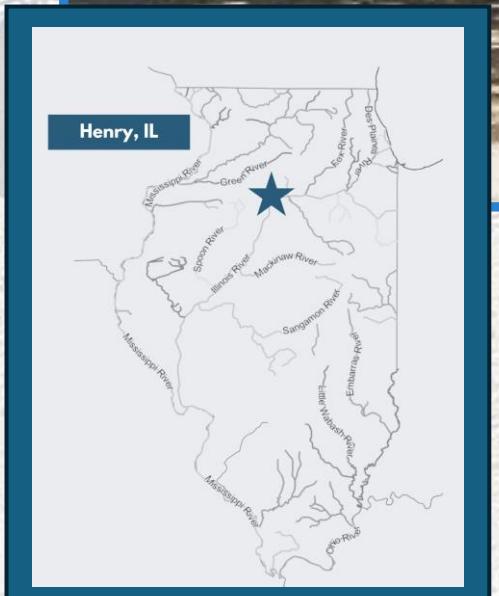
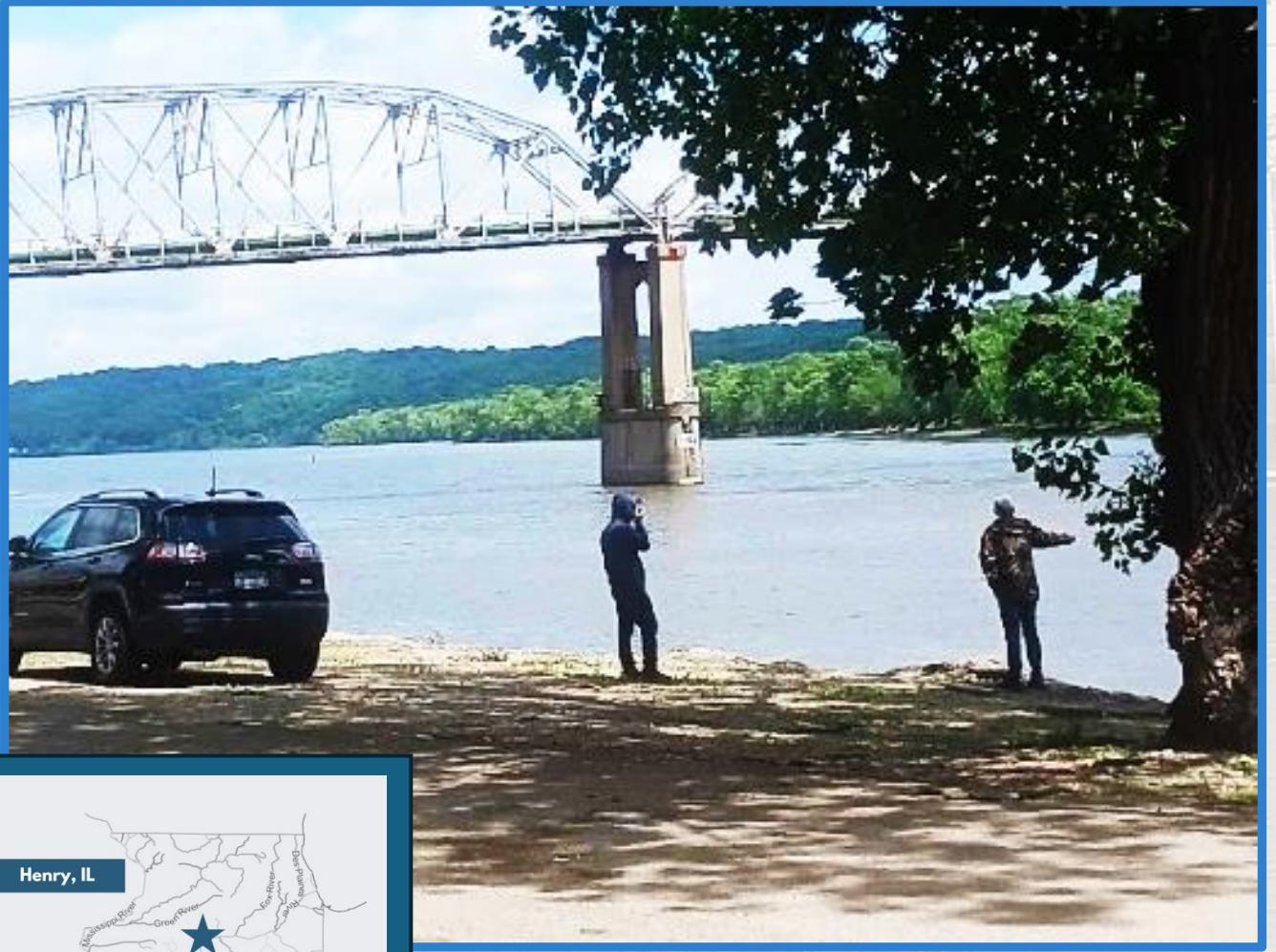
## Rockin' at the River Summer Concert Series

1.3K likes • 1.5K followers



# East Dubuque, IL





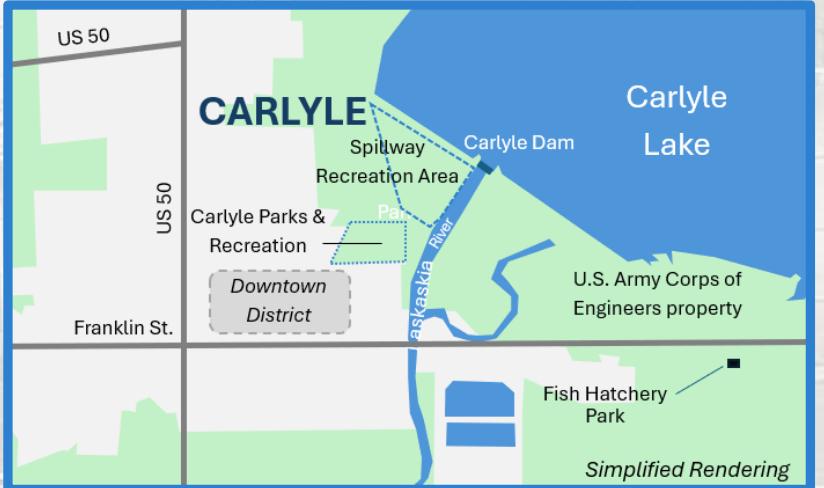
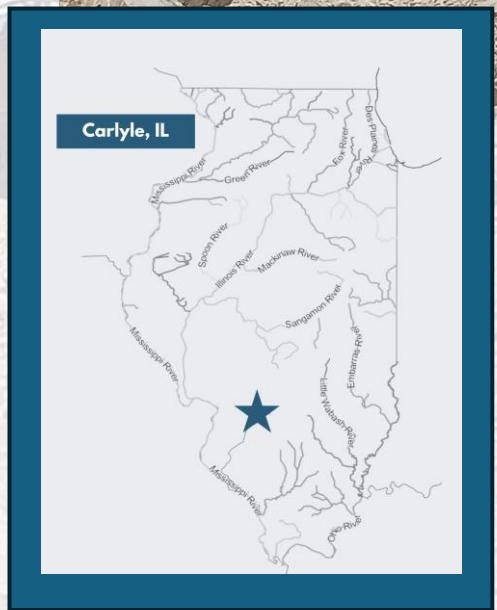
# Henry, IL

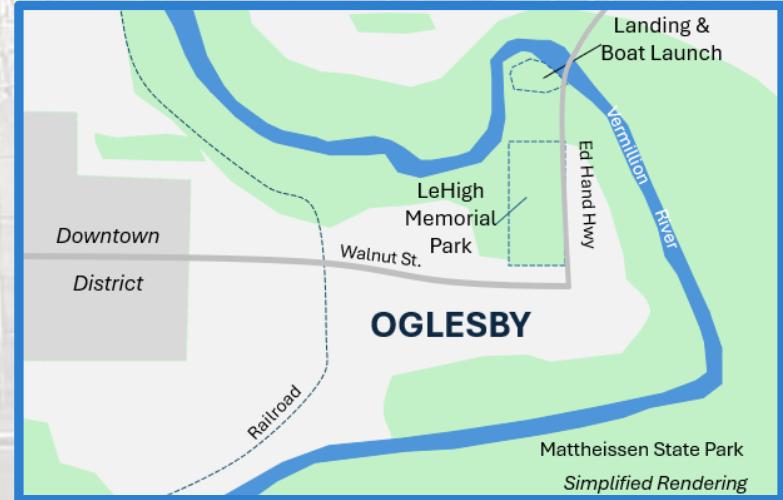


The Great Loop: An Amazing Boating Adventure – LakeHub



# Carlyle, IL





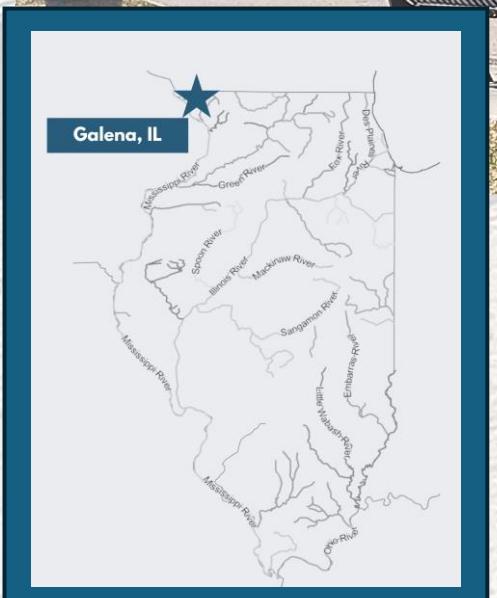
# Oglesby, IL

# Video Presentation

- Educational video, 3.5 minutes
- Peruse our report using the link

# Challenges

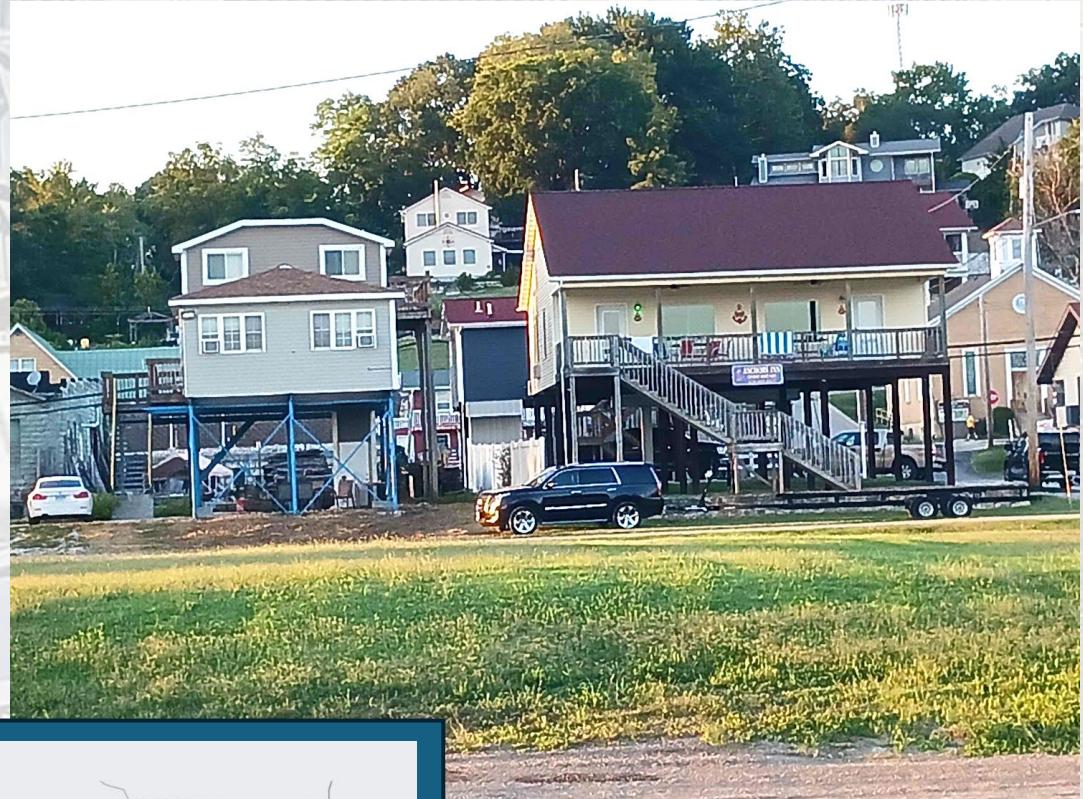
- **Few municipalities with populations below 5,000 have created prominent statewide attractions along rivers** that are magnets for tourism. Most focus on festivals for those living nearby. Galena and Grafton are exceptions.
- **Residential or hospitality developments on riverfront parcels are uncommon.** Few municipalities subsidize river-oriented businesses. Among the reasons are chronic flooding, hefty levees, and modest economic growth.
- **Municipal governments generally lack the resources to engage in large-scale habitat preservation efforts** or directly manage wetlands, with Charleston and Monticello being notable exceptions. Nonetheless, many have strong relationships with nonprofit conservation organizations.



# Galena, IL

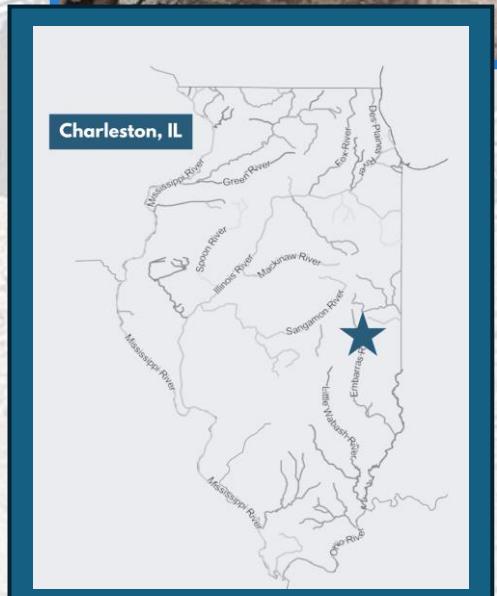


**18th Annual Galena  
Oktoberfest**



# Grafton, IL





# Charleston, IL



**Table 2. Policies and Program of 25 Featured Communities**

Featured Community	Riverside Park (* behind levee, ** separated by highway, ^ maintained by local nonprofit, #overlook)	Festival(s) or large events along river (*on federal land)	Municipal Camp-ground (*privately run)	Public Boat launch	Nature Center along River	Amphitheater or performance stage	Largescale Habitat Preservation	Extensive Nonprofit Conservancy	Pedestrian Bridge(s)	Marina, full service
Bourbonnais	X		X*	X						
Carlyle	X	X*		X						
Charleston	X			X						
East Dubuque	X^			X						X
Elizabethtown	X			X						
Galena	X	X		X					X	
Godfrey	X^			X	X					
Grafton	X			X						X
Hamilton	X			X						X
Havana	X		X	X	X	X				
Henry	X			X						X
Lacon	X	X		X						X
Mahomet	X			X			X	X		

# New Activities for 2023-24

- Municipal Recognition & Report
- Event on evening of February 13 + Webinars
- Program near Alton on April 10 (late morning)
- River Fellows Program
- Join our listserv

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