2025 Ecological Assessment of the Illinois River Watershed: Illinois River Watershed Partnership Report

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The Illinois River Watershed Partnership ("IRWP") issued a report titled:

2025 ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT OF THE ILLINOIS RIVER WATERSHED ("Report").

IRWP describes its mission as to:

… improve the integrity of the Illinois River Watershed through public education, outreach, and implementation of conservation and restoration practices throughout the watershed.

By way of introduction, IRWP notes that the Illinois River Watershed ("Watershed") extends from Northwest Arkansas into Eastern Oklahoma, covering over 1,600 square miles. Further, the Watershed is noted to be:

- Ecologically diverse with extensive cave systems.
- Upland and lowland prairies.
- Oak-hickory dominant forests.
- Northern and westernmost portion of the Boston Mountain Range.
- Holds many karst systems formed by soluble rocks, such as limestone.
- Downstream of the developing Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers-Bentonville metropolitan areas.
- A priority watershed in Arkansas, Oklahoma, and the Cherokee Nation.

The Report's assessment addresses 14 sub-watersheds:

- In-stream, streambank, and riparian ecological conditions.
- Water chemistry.
- Macroinvertebrate diversity.

Goals of monitoring the Watershed are noted to be:

- Gain an improved ecological understanding of the entire watershed.
- Provide long term trend analysis of watershed conditions at small geographic intervals.
- Identify priority areas for management activities such as education and outreach campaigns, conservation projects, and restoration projects.

The Report, its findings and management recommendations are stated to be potentially helpful for city and county elected officials and relevant staff, business leaders, and interested landowners to make decisions across the Watershed addressing:

- Land use and management activities.

- Stormwater management.
- Natural resource issues.

Components of the Report include:

- Summary of Findings.
- Arkansas Summary.
- Oklahoma Summary.
- Macroinvertebrate Diversity Index Summary.
- Nitrates Summary.
- Phosphorus Summary.
- Sulfates Summary.
- Total Coliforms Summary.
- Correlation and Regression Summary.
- Ballard Creek (AR.
- Blair Creek (AR).
- Clear Creek (AR)
- Evansville Creek (AR).
- Illinois River (AR).
- Moores Creek (AR).
- Muddy Fork (AR.)
- Osage Creek (AR).
- Sager Creek (AR).
- Spring Creek (AR).
- Barren Fork (OK).
- Caney Creek (OK).
- Flint Creek (OK).
- Town Branch (OK).
- Discussion and Recommendations

A copy of the Report can be found here.