

# Friends of the Chicago River

## A Few New and Good Books on the Chicago River

### Reverse Effect

A new book examining that the past and potential of the Chicago River is due out this week. Called *Reverse Effect: Renewing Chicago Waterways* and written by Chicago architect Jeanne Gang, the book is an investigation into the impact of separating the Chicago River system to address the issue of aquatic invasive species and how that change could connect and recharge the surrounding communities.

The project stemmed from Natural Resource Defense Council's engineering study, "Re-Envisioning the Chicago River: Adopting Comprehensive Regional Solutions to the Invasive Species Crisis," which Gang used as the basis of a studio course she taught at the Harvard University Graduate School of Design in spring 2011. Her students' work inspired the creation of *Reverse Effect*, which contains engaging essays and interviews from the people who work on, use, and think about the Chicago River every day. Gang recently received a MacArthur Foundation Genius grant and was selected to design two of the four new river-edge boat houses in Chicago. NRCDC is a long-time partner with Friends on water quality and related issues.

### The Lost Panoramas

This year we will also gain insight into our engineering actions with an amazing photographic collection called, *The Lost Panoramas: When Chicago Changed its River and the Land Beyond*, the latest work by Michael Williams and Richard Cahan. The book will be released November 29.

*The Lost Panoramas* explores the history of the Chicago River and the impact its reversal had on the watershed all the way to the Mississippi River through never-before-published duotones that were taken by the Metropolitan Sanitary District of Greater Chicago to document the digging of the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal, which opened in 1900.

Photographers surveyed the river system, shooting more than 20,000 photos using six-by-eight-inch glass plate—a process that involved great precision so that multiple images aligned to create one continuous scene. The images were taken between 1892 and 1930.

Offering the most complete description available of the river reversal, the stories told here provide a better understanding as to how it was done and why it was deemed necessary, as well as how the water from the Chicago River is treated.

Michael Williams is the author or coauthor of 10 books on Chicago history, including *Chicago: City on the Move*. Richard Cahan is a former picture editor for the *Chicago Sun-Times* and was the director of *CITY 2000*. They are the coauthors of *Edgar Miller and the Hand-Made Home* and *Richard Nickel's Chicago*

### Further Voices

In addition to the efforts described above, there are many good works on the Chicago River available through Amazon and other sources including:

- *The Chicago River: An Illustrated History and Guide to the River and its Waterways* by David M. Solzman
- *The Chicago River: A Natural and Unnatural History* by Libby Hill
- *A View of the River: The Chicago Architectural Foundation River Cruise* by Jennifer Marjorie Bosch and Henrich Blessing



- *The Chicago River* by Jonathan Genzen
- *The Chicago River from Your Window: An Illustrated River Watcher's Guide* by Paul Frisbie and [available](#) through Friends of the Chicago River

Watch for more information on *MIDSTREAM: The Chicago River, 1999-2010*, a book of more than 100 photographs by Richard Wasserman is being published by Columbia College Chicago Press in January 2012.

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