

**VOICE
FOR THE
RIVER**



ENDOWMENT FUND

Friends of the Chicago River





The “divine” Chicago River



Frontier settlers along the Checagou prairie stream had a nickname for it – “The Divine.” Why? Was it the promise of fortune at this crossroads to the West or the river’s potential to link the Great Lakes with the Mississippi or its sacred powers that Native Americans spoke of? We will never know. But we do know that the Chicago River **can** be divine again.

Just over a century ago, the river was so foul with pollution that its stench permeated and sickened the city. Our “City of Big Shoulders” dared to solve the problem by reversing the river’s flow. Only a few decades ago, Chicagoans were part of the nation-wide environmental movement that paved the way for the Clean Water Act. Our river continues to rebound in the 21st century – wildlife is returning; outdoor enthusiasts are making it their own; picturesque riverwalks are springing up.

The river will never again be “divine” in the way that it was before earlier Chicagoans degraded and denaturalized it. But **our Chicago River can be as divine as today’s lakefront**. The green technology, environmental regulations, and public interest exist to make this happen. However, without a voice to speak out on the river’s behalf today and tomorrow, a wonderful future for our river is far from assured.



Friends of the Chicago River invites **you** to write the next chapter in the river's story. We ask you, in bold Chicago style, to be as bold as those who dared to dream of a great metropolis on a prairie stream and who reversed the river's flow. We ask you to join us in the challenge of making the Chicago River a crowning jewel of the region.

Long embraced by civic pioneers from Daniel Burham to Mayor Richard M. Daley, this dream is shared by growing numbers of public officials, business leaders, and ordinary citizens. It is also a big challenge that requires long-term commitment, vigilance, expertise, and imagination.

Friends established our "Voice for the River" endowment to help realize the long-term dream of a healthy, thriving, and accessible Chicago River for all people and wildlife in our region. Through this fund, **you can ensure that the river is protected and enhanced for decades to come**, and that river's future is a great one.

Why an Endowment? The River Will Always Need Friends.

Since Chicago's earliest days our river has been the focus of big dreams and grand schemes. Sometimes Chicagoans improved the river, changing it to protect public health and economic well being. Other times the river was short-sightedly blighted and degraded. The Chicago River continues to be a focal point for municipal development plans, some that enhance the river's vitality and some that detract from it. Friends expects these opposing forces to always be an issue.

For three decades, our organization has provided a voice for the river, ensuring that all its uses – commercial, civic, recreational, and natural – can co-exist harmoniously when each is respected and safeguarded. We believe an expert, experienced, non-partisan voice dedicated exclusively to the river's well-being will always be needed. Your support will ensure that Friends will always have a seat at the table, advocating for the river's vitality.





The Coming Decades and Beyond

The Chicago River is at a turning point. Old ideas of the river as a sewage canal have given way to new hope for a thriving, green river that strengthens our economy and enriches our quality of life. Innovative civic, business, and community leaders see the river as one of our region's great assets and are fighting for its future. Friends of the Chicago River's membership base and volunteers are booming, too. Friends harnesses this energy to lead the way for the river's continued revival.

But improving water quality standards, ensuring and enhancing public access, and building a broad base of popular support for the river are step-by-step, long-term initiatives. Bringing back animals and plants that naturally belong to the river takes time, too.



Our “Voice for the River” endowment ensures that there will always be a guardian to address these issues. It also makes Friends stronger by supplementing annual contributions and paying for public policy work that is typically not funded by grants. Further, our endowment provides Friends with the diverse funding base that donors and investors agree is critical to a nonprofit organization’s long-term success.



The Power of Your Voice

The “Voice for the River” endowment gives you the chance to speak out on behalf of the river for generations to come. Your gift enables us to:

- Create and implement concept plans for long-term, systemic river improvements
- Respond to river-edge real estate and land development proposals
- Help shape clean water policies
- Work with elected officials
- Generate publicity that engages the public in river issues
- Mobilize communities to fight for the river’s health

The Legacy You Leave

The goals that your endowment gift helps Friends of the Chicago River achieve are:

- A greener river, with clean water and a rich abundance of native plants and animals
- A river that is safe and accessible for recreation, with riverwalks, boat launches, places to fish, and thriving habitat and naturalized areas
- A better cared for river, with organized and well-trained stewards ranging from public officials to everyday citizens
- A treasured Chicago River that supports all of our region's needs – commercial, civic, recreational, and natural – and is one of the world's most beautiful and engaging urban waterways





How to Give

You may contribute to the endowment through outright donations of cash, securities, and property. You may also make a planned gift by including Friends of the Chicago River in your will. If you are considering a planned gift, discuss it with your attorney or contact Friends about speaking with one of our volunteer Planned Giving Committee members. These experienced gift advisors can help you select a plan that best suits your interests and assets.

For donors who wish to pay special tribute to a loved one, Friends has several naming opportunities at our McCormick Bridgehouse & Chicago River Museum as well as other ways to recognize major gifts.

Next steps

Please contact Friends' director of development at (312) 939-0490 with questions, for more information, or to make gift arrangements. Or simply complete and return the enclosed endowment fund reply card.



Friends of the Chicago River

28 E. Jackson Blvd., Suite 1800 • Chicago, IL 60604
(312) 939-0490 • chicagoriver.org



People Like You

Our endowment fund is supported by people like you who celebrate and share Friends' long-term commitment to the Chicago River. ...People who cherish nature immediately in our midst and the river as a place for recreation, learning, and inspiration. ...People who love Chicago and see the river's potential to transform our riverfront into one of the grandest in the world. ...People who relish in knowing that eastern spiny soft shell turtles have a home here; that otters are returning; and great blue herons, weary from hundred-mile migrations, can find a place to rest and find food. ...People who believe that it is right to take care of the natural world in which we live, including the marvel and wonder of the Chicago River.



**I want to help ensure there is always a VOICE FOR THE RIVER
by supporting Friends of the Chicago River's endowment fund.**

Please check one:

- My endowment fund gift of \$ _____ is enclosed.
- Charge my credit card. See reverse side to provide credit card information.
- Send me instructions for contributing securities.
- Contact me to discuss a planned gift or legacy gift.

Complete if appropriate:
My gift is a special tribute to
a loved one. Please note this
tribute as follows:

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, and Zip _____

Daytime phone _____ Email _____

Return this form to: Friends of the Chicago River • 28 E. Jackson Blvd., Suite 1800 • Chicago, Illinois 60604

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CREDIT CARD INFORMATION

Please charge my endowment gift of \$ _____ to the following credit card:

Circle one Visa MasterCard Discover American Express

Card number _____

Name as it appears on card please print _____

Exp. date _____ 3-4 digit security code _____

FOR GIFTS BY CHECK, PLEASE MAKE PAYABLE TO:
Friends of the Chicago River

