



Water experts needed for Science Advisory Committee

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Group to tackle river resource, management issues

ALTON - June 6, 2011. Lt. Governor Sheila Simon is now accepting applications for the state's Science Advisory Committee, which is expanding its battle against Asian carp and other potential threats to Illinois rivers, at no cost to Illinois taxpayers.

The Science Advisory Committee serves as the expert scientific and technical arm of the three river councils chaired by Simon, which are comprised of citizens and representatives from not-for-profit organizations and state and federal agencies. Together, the Science Advisory Committee and river councils will work to find cost-effective ways to improve the ecological health of the Illinois, Mississippi, Ohio and Wabash rivers.

"The Science Advisory Committee brings together the best and brightest river researchers in our state to keep our water safe for our native species and the people who live, work and play along our rivers," Simon said. "I look forward to working with the committee to find innovative ways to protect and manage our waterways."

First established in 1999, the Science Advisory Committee is chaired by University of Illinois scientist emeritus Nani Bhowmik and, starting this year, will be hosted by the

award-winning National Great Rivers Research and Education Center (NGRREC) at Lewis and Clark Community College. Members of the Science Advisory Committee serve on a voluntary basis.

"We are pleased that NGRREC will host the Science Advisory Committee," NGRREC Chair and Lewis and Clark President Dale Chapman said. "NGRREC is focused on developing sustainable practices and policies that will protect the great rivers of the world and Illinois' waterways, and we are looking forward to engaging other scientists in our mission."

Simon will appoint up to four volunteers to the committee, who will join additional appointees from NGRREC. Applicants should possess an advanced degree in civil engineering, hydrology, aquatic ecology, or a related field, and be very familiar with the latest news, research, barriers and potential solutions in their field. A minimal commitment of 75 hours per year is required.

The committee previously published research illustrating the importance of preventing Asian carp and other invasive species from moving between the Great Lakes and Illinois River. The work helped secure full federal funding for two electric barriers in the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal, which serve as a barricade between the Mississippi River and Lake Michigan.

The committee also obtained funds for the State Geologic Survey to digitize the historic aerial photographs of the State of Illinois from 1938. By making this information easy to access, researchers and planners can critically evaluate land use changes over the past 70 years.

Beginning this summer, the committee will explore many other aspects relating to water and environmental management and change. The most pressing issue is developing an adaptive management policy for the state. Currently, it is very difficult for large state and federal restoration projects to alter construction plans mid-project when unexpected problems or errors are encountered.

"I look forward to integrating my longstanding history and expertise of working with the Science Advisory Committee with the broad array of scientists that NGRREC can focus on Illinois' rivers," Bhowmik said.

Those interested in serving on the Science Advisory Committee should e-mail a cover letter of interest and curriculum vitae to Olivia Dorothy at olivia.dorothy@illinois.gov prior to July 15. For more information, visit www.ltgov.illinois.gov.