From tourism to dam removal, this Governor's conference floats ideas for a sparkling future.

Focus on the River

Aerial Art 2006 Joe Couri

From the north, this wintry view of the expanse known as lower Peoria Lakes shows the several bridges that cross the river at Peoria. The channel remains open, though ice builds to the east. Downstream, the backwater lakes glaze the horizon. **"The challenge of photography is not as much learning how to use the camera as it is being in the right place at the right time. The timing of the interplay among the clouds, sun and horizon can be critical."**

Story By Marilyn Leyland

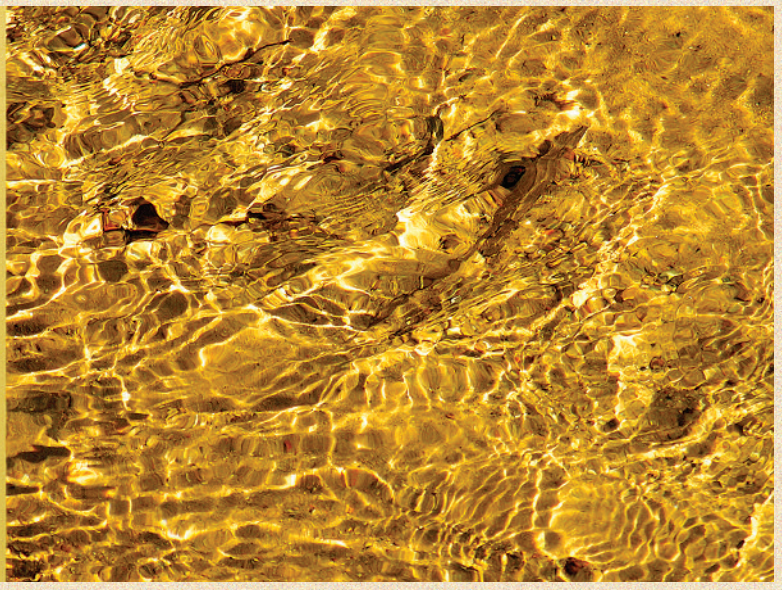
For the past 20 years, the Governor's Conference on the Management of the Illinois River System has brought a variety of perspectives into focus on the health of the state's namesake waterway. This year's 11th biennial conference, Oct. 2-4 at Peoria's Holiday Inn City Centre, will include a show of works by 10 Peoria-area photographers challenged to capture images of the Illinois River.

Last year the Peoria Art Guild curated the show "Illinois River Stories: A Journey with Regional Photographers."

"I like the idea that public policy can be shaped by our hearts as well as our minds," said Terry Kohlbuss, executive director of the TriCounty Regional Planning Commission and a member of the 2005 conference planning committee.

This year's conference adopts the theme "The Illinois River—Continuing Our Commitment." The heads of the five state agencies and six federal agencies with responsibilities affecting the health of the river will present updates on their programs. A dozen separate sessions address specific topics ranging from nature-based tourism and river restoration to urban storm-water management and dam removal. Two sessions deal with the Asian carp problem, including the potential for sport fishing and commercial harvest.

The Illinois River Coordinating Council holds its fall quarterly meeting in conjunction with the conference. The evening session on Oct. 2 chaired by Lt. Gov. Pat



Tributaries 2006 Barbara Hoffman

The dappled sand of the creek flowing out of Singing Woods provides a clear contrast to the yellow-brown silted water of the Kickapoo Creek near Peoria. Both streams contribute to the Illinois River.

"The Illinois River has always been a visual and spiritual magnet for me."

Quinn is open to the public and includes presentations and public comment.

A day-long conservation tour on Oct. 2 via motorcoach will take participants to a variety of sites in the Peoria area, including historic Springdale Cemetery with its erosion control projects, Singing Woods (a subdivision striving to be in harmony with nature), restored wetlands, streambank stabilization and wildlife habitat restoration.

In honor of their 50th anniversary in Illinois, The Nature Conservancy's lead scientist, Dr. John Wiens, will speak at the closing luncheon. The Wednesday luncheon will feature Jon Scholl of the USEPA speaking on "Agriculture Producing Environmental Solutions."

Registration information is available on-line at www.conferences.uiuc.edu/ilriver or by calling (877) 455-2687.

Proceedings from the 10 previous conferences are available at http://ilrdss.sws.uiuc.edu.

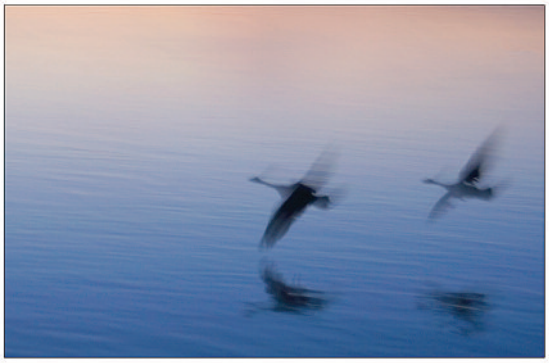
Marilyn Voss Leyland of East Peoria has served on the planning committee for 10 of the 11 conferences. She retired from Corporate Public Affairs at Caterpillar Inc. several years ago.

At the Illinois River Near Pekin 2003 Ken Kashian

A potential snag at high water, this driftwood rests well beyond the channel marker on a sandy shore of this leveed stretch south of Peoria.

"When we came out of a wooded area to get there it seemed to me that I had been transported to some other part of the country."

Moon and Geese 2006
David Zalaznik/Journal Star
The moon serves as a backdrop for these flocks of geese as they fly over Grafton before daybreak.
"Photography is a moment in time captured with permanence. It forces us to pause, observe and ponder. It encourages introspection and can help prioritize our values. Photographing the Illinois River has led me to see it as a force flowing through all our lives. My hope is this body of work contributes to greater understanding and value of this unique natural resource enriching our lives."



Flow 2006 Doug and Eileen Leunig
The light fog of early morning gives rise to moving images for this husband/wife team.
Doug: "For this project, Eileen and I combined our efforts into collaborative pieces to support a stylistic theme communicating 'the same thing, only different.' Our images exemplify our own visions about the same idea. Our experience deepened our appreciation of this valuable resource."
Eileen: "The Illinois River Stories project has reawakened in me the mystique of the river. The river is forever changing, and endlessly watchable."

May Fly 2006 Scott Cavanah
A single mayfly rises to greet the day just north of Spring Bay.
"I needed to experience the river, to feel its power. Donning a pair of chest waders and walking out into the water got me just that. I was amazed to find out how wide the Illinois gets as you travel north from Peoria, but even more surprised to find out how shallow it is."