

CLOSING COMMENTS

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The dismissal bell is about to ring and close the 11th Biennial Conference on the Management of the Illinois River System. Our focus for this year's conference *The Illinois River – Continuing Our Commitment* was well covered in the past three days. I like to study words. Commitment is an interesting word. When I hit the thesaurus menu on my computer a multitude of synonyms appear, including some of these: promise, pledge, assurance, dedication, loyalty, steadfastness, obligation, duty, and responsibility. Good words to describe the actions of people working to improve the Illinois River Watershed.

Over forty people, scientists, researchers, policy advisors, practitioners, and educators, who represent state, federal, and local agencies along with community volunteers make up the committee and dedicate their time and expertise to make this conference happen. These people are the curriculum committee. They identify the subjects to be covered and secure the presenters that we that we have learned from during past three days. We thank-you for all of your efforts.

This conference is like going back to school and having a "crash course" taught by nearly one-hundred teachers. Thanks go to our keynote speakers, State and Federal Directors, concurrent session presenters, exhibitors, technology experts, and moderators for providing us with timely information and valuable insight. They used a variety of different methods for instruction - a field trip touring "on the ground successes" - from farms to a cemetery; classroom periods and lectures with presentations; a science fair with exhibits; and even a lab with "live" technology demonstrations.

We are now graduating with greater knowledge of the complexity of the Illinois River System. We have learned about economic development efforts, restoration work, the control and uses of Asian Carp, the impacts of natural disasters, geologic history, management of urban storm water, and the importance of monitoring.

We appreciate all of our sponsors for their dedication of financial and in-kind contributions to this conference. Special kudos to my Co-chair, Bob Frazee with twenty-two years of outstanding leadership for this conference and for previous conferences—he is the principal of this effort. And finally, for all of this to be possible it takes all of you, to be students, teachers, administrators, and funders to make this conference a success. We sincerely appreciate your active participation.

We leave here having experienced the *continued commitment* in the steadfast dedication and the responsibility to care for and to be stewards in the management of the Illinois River System. The 2007 Conference on the Management of the Illinois River System is now adjourned. Go and *continue your commitment* in the Illinois River Watershed. Thank-you!