May 15, 2018

Wayne Rosenthal, Director
Illinois Department of Natural Resources
One Natural Resources Way
Springfield, IL 62702-1271

RE: Fox River Connectivity & Habitat- Section 519, Illinois River Basin
Ecosystem Restoration Program

Dear Director Rosenthal,

The Fox River Study Group (FRSG) has discussed our interest in helping restart the *Section 519 Fox River Habitat & Connectivity Study* with members of your staff and representatives of Army Corps of Engineers (Corps). The study is 50% complete. Its completion is crucial to the efforts we have underway to improve habitat and water quality in the Fox River.

The Fox River Study Group is willing to help provide the needed funding for the Corps to complete the study. When we met with ACE and IDNR staff on March 19, 2018, we understood it would be possible for the FRSG to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department that the FRSG would provide the needed funding to the Department. In turn, IDNR would continue as the local cost share sponsor and execute a new Fox River Feasibility Study Agreement with the Corps. From discussions we have had over the last year with the Corps, we anticipate that the needed funding the FRSG would be around $209,000.

Here is some background on our group. We incorporated in 2003, and the IRS granted us status as a 501(c)(3) non-profit charitable organization in February 2005. We are diverse group of stakeholders working together to improve the Fox River. As you can see in the sidebar, we are governed by a nine-member board who represent counties, towns, water reclamation plants, and watershed and environmental advocacy groups.
We are working to improve habitat and water quality in the Fox River. The river suffers from high levels of algae that contribute to conditions where oxygen levels drop to low levels, especially in the many dam pools. Water reclamation plants are working to reduce their input of phosphorus to the river as phosphorus fuels the growth of algae. By 2021, these efforts will lead to a 75% reduction in the levels of phosphorus in the Fox River during critical summer months.

Removing dams that no longer serve their original purpose would also remove the still water pools that provide a favorable environment for algal growth. This is in addition to the many benefits of dam removal described in the draft *Fox River Habitat & Connectivity Study*, including improved habitat in the former dam pools and improved passage for fish and mussels. Having the report completed would provide vital information to help us develop the next steps to continue our Fox River restoration work.

We’re eager to keep this project moving forward. Please let us know if there is anything else you need from the Fox River Study Group to help get the *Fox River Habitat & Connectivity Study* underway again.

Thank you for the Department’s interest and efforts on behalf of the Fox River which serves as the centerpiece for the Fox River Valley community.

Sincerely,

Kyla Jacobsen, Secretary
info@foxriverstudygroup.org

cc: via email to—
Lawrence.Patterson@illinois.gov
Rita.Lee@illinois.gov
Arthur.Neal@illinois.gov
Bob.Appleman@illinois.gov
Andrew.L.Leichty@usace.army.mil
Julie.L.Millhollin@usace.army.mil
Frank.M.Veraldi@usace.army.mil
Sanjay.Sofat@illinois.gov