

RIVER ECOLOGY & GOVERNANCE TASK FORCE STEWARDSHIP & VOLUNTEERS WORKING GROUP

Notes and tasks to undertake from the April 18, 2019 Stewardship and Volunteers Group

Mission: Increase the number and diversity of people engaged as volunteers and stewards to improve the health of the river and adjacent lands and communities

Issues to address:

- Physical access to the river
- Communication of river as a place to be
- Understanding ecological restoration
- Lots of people / density -> how to message?
 - Human density and its impact on nature
- Messaging around stewardship – how to sell the benefits?
 - Stewardship definition, not always hours in the field, its monitoring, advocacy, trash pickup
- Prioritize and target communities

Discussion of trash clean-up as a possible entrée into stewardship:

- Who is legally required to address trash and how is it approached
 - MWRD
 - City of Chicago
- Need to engage operations people: who are the folks actually out on the river doing clean-up work from an agency perspective?
- Weirs, working with prevailing winds, and other ways of facilitating clean-up efforts
- FOCR has 35 organizations involved in Litter Free Chicago River
- FOCR and Waste Management are collecting data on the sources of trash
- Consider the FPDCC volunteer coordination structure for trash whereby there are collection sites for volunteers to place trash and debris which are collected by FPDCC staff.

How to prioritize shared resources and improve the equitable distribution of them towards stewardship?

- Identify different ways of engaging communities and interested parties
- Stewardship has to be connected to the projects that are bubbling up
- Stress the ecological importance of the river: need to better articulate this

Make use of what we have

Coordinate with existing organizations, non-profit and government that have programs either focused on the river and that provide examples of desired programs to create a system for the river.