

October 1, 2009

The Honorable Aaron Schock  
509 Cannon Building  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Schock:


I applaud your leadership for restoration efforts on the Upper Mississippi River, and specifically, The Nature Conservancy's restoration projects along the Illinois River. Thank you for your work to ensure a total of \$22.8 million in appropriations for Upper Mississippi River projects from the Energy and Water appropriations bill. These projects will restore ecosystems and habitat that sustain hundreds of diverse and rare species such as the pallid sturgeon. People rely on the river for transportation and commerce and maintaining a functioning navigation system is important to both U.S. and regional economies.

Your active support of our work at the Emiquon Preserve and at Spunky Bottoms was critical to the inclusion of these highly important projects under the Continuing Authorities for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to complete feasibility reports for floodplain restoration. Once plans are complete, construction can proceed on reconnection and water control structures that will contribute to improved water quality, reduced nutrient levels and flood damages.

In addition, your support of a \$336,000 appropriation for the Illinois River Basin Restoration will support conservation along the River to address sedimentation, water quality, destruction of habitat and the spread of invasive species.

The appropriation for fiscal year 2010 for these projects is essential for restoring these areas which are so important to our ecology and our economy. We appreciate your interest and support for The Nature Conservancy's priorities for restoration.

Sincerely,

  
Leslee Spraggins  
State Director