



Office of Mayor Lawrence J. Morrissey

## PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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## ROCK RIVER TRAIL ACHIEVES NATIONAL WATER TRAILS SYSTEM STATUS, ONE OF ONLY TEN IN THE NATION

ROCKFORD – Mayor Morrissey and the Rockford City Council proclaimed the week of April 21<sup>st</sup> “*Rock River Water Trail Week*” in honor of the Rock River Trail being only the tenth water trail in the country to be designated into the National Water Trails System by U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar. The official letter of designation and plaque have been received by the Rock River Trail Initiative’s founder and coordinator, Frank Schier, editor and publisher of the *Rock River Times*.

The National Water Trails System is a distinctive national network of exemplary water trails of local and regional significance that are cooperatively supported and sustained. The trails system has been established to protect and restore America’s rivers, shorelines and waterways and to increase access to outdoor recreation on shorelines and waterways.



“This type of national recognition puts us on the map nationally for water trail recreation and tourism as well as environmental stewardship, and also lays a good foundation to apply for grants from government and other private foundation sources in the future,” stated Frank Schier, coordinator of the Rock River Trail Initiative.

Trails in the National Water Trail System must meet four criteria for national recreation trails plus incorporate seven best management practices. The Rock River Water Trail links 11 counties in both states along the 320-mile river course, from the headwaters above the Horicon Marsh in Fond du Lac and Dodge counties to the confluence with the Mississippi River at Rock

Island, Illinois. The water trail is a delineated path on the river that connects access sites, resting places and attractions for users of water craft.

“I want to thank Frank Schier and the entire Rock River Trail organization for their leadership in establishing one of Rockford’s best physical assets, the Rock River, as one of only ten National Water Trails in the United States. This puts the Rock River on the national stage as a water trail to visit and recreate, and capitalizing on the Rock River has been one of my top priorities,” stated Mayor Morrissey.

Included in this week’s ***“Rock River Trail Week” activities is a distribution of up to 10,000 trees in the 11 counties along the Rock River.*** Chad Pregracke, president of Living Lands and Waters' One Million Trees program, has donated these 30,000 trees to the Rock River Trail Initiative and our river. Each of the 11 counties will get at least 900 trees, with 450 trees slated for the public sector (city, county, state, forest preserves or conservation areas), and the other 450 trees slated for farms, residences and businesses along the Rock River.

For Winnebago County while supplies last, contact Rockford Park District Natural Areas Maintenance Coordinator Nate Hill, phone 815-289-9901. Distribution of the trees will be on Sat., April 27, 2011, from 10:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. as supply lasts at the Rockford Park District Trolley Station, 302 N. Madison. Keep Northern Illinois Beautiful (KNIB) as part of the Great American Clean Up will offer trees at Rockton Village Green Park, 149 E. Chapel St., Rockton; Roscoe Public Works Building, 5402 Swanson Road, Roscoe; South Beloit Fire Station, 149 Gardner St., South Beloit; and New Milford Village Hall, 6771 11th St., New Milford. The Rock River Trail Initiative Council Members for Winnebago County are Rockford Park District Executive Director Emeritus and Historian Webbs Norman, Tom Lindblade, President of the Illinois Paddling Council, and Frank Schier, Editor & Publisher of the Rock River Times.

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