

## **Title: Who killed the Illinois River?**

**Objective:** Students will compare first person accounts of the demise of the river to scientific analysis using the *Harvesting the River* online resources and files (video, audio, image) to develop a perspective on the human aspects of river resource use.



*Havana Waterfront*

**Grades:** High School up

**Time Required:** one period to research files; one period to formulate response; one period to discuss.

**Motivation:** From the first third of the nineteenth century, the Illinois River played an important role in the settlement of Illinois and in local and state economies. Soon after the beginning of the twentieth century, things began to change with the growth of Chicago, expansion of agriculture, and the spread of improved land transportation.



*Chicago Sanitary & Shipping Canal*

What factors of change were important to the local river people?

Does their opinion about the demise of their river life correlate with what actually happened?

What factors may they have left out?

### **Question to explore:**

1. According to musselers, fishermen, hunters, and other river people speaking in the audio and video clips in the Web site, what factors helped cause the demise of the Illinois River and its harvesting industries?
2. Were these opinions corroborated by scientific data of the Illinois Natural History Surveys and Department of Natural Resources data?
3. What contributions did public policy make in both the demise and return of river quality? Who participated in the formation of the public policy? Who felt left out? Why?
4. What implication does this have today? What improvements are being made on the Illinois River? Who is benefiting (Industries, corporations, transportation, towns, tourism, labor, agriculture)?

**Resources:** <http://www.museum.state.il.us/exhibits/harvesting/index.html>

images

video clips

audio clips

government reports

written histories

**Illinois State Board of Education Goals Addressed:**

**Social Science: Political Systems:**

**Late Elementary through Late High school:**

**14.D.2:** Explain ways that individuals and groups influence and shape public policy.

**14.D.3:** Describe roles and influences of individuals, groups and media in shaping current Illinois and United States public policy (e.g., general public opinion, special interest groups: Analyze roles and influences of individuals, groups, and media in shaping current debates on state and national policies

**14.D.5:** Interpret a variety of public policies and issues from the perspectives of different individuals and groups

**Social Systems:**

**Late High School: 18.A.5:** Compare ways in which social systems are affected by political, environmental, economic and technological changes.

**18.B.5:** Use methods of social science inquiry (pose questions, collect and analyze data, make and support conclusions with evidence, report findings) to study the development and functions of social systems and report conclusions to a larger audience.

**Economics:**

**Early High School: 15.E.4b:** Describe social and environmental benefits and consequences of production and consumption.

**History:**

**Late High School: 16.B.5b: (US)** Analyze how United States political history has been influenced by the nation's economic, social and environmental history.