

You depend on nature—we're here to save it. We're working with you to make a positive impact around the world in more than 30 countries, all 50 United States and your backyard. [Learn More](#)

[Log In](#) | [My Nature Page](#) | [Shop](#)

[Home](#) [Our Initiatives](#) [Regions](#) [North America](#) [United States](#) [Illinois](#) [Places We Protect](#)

Illinois
[Places We Protect](#)

Subscribe Now

Get our monthly e-newsletter filled with eco-tips and info on the places you care about most.

Sign Up

Illinois Emiquon

Emiquon is one of the largest floodplain restoration projects in the U.S. outside of the Everglades.



[About](#) [Photos & Video](#)

Emiquon, an hour south of Peoria on the Illinois River, is one of the largest floodplain restoration projects in the country outside the Florida Everglades. It is the premiere demonstration site for The Nature Conservancy's work on the Illinois River and within the Upper Mississippi River system and may ultimately help guide large floodplain river **restoration** efforts around the world.



Emiquon once was the jewel of the Illinois River, nurturing diverse and abundant communities of native plants and animals in the complex system of backwater wetlands and lakes. Hundreds of nearby archeological sites, including Native American villages and ceremonial and burial mounds, are a quiet testimony to the abundant natural resources that supported more than 500 generations of civilization in this area.

What to See at Emiquon: Plants

Once restored, Emiquon will be home to several varieties of prairie grasses, such as big bluestem, Indian grass, black-eyed susan and prairie coreopsis. Eventually, the Conservancy plans on returning hardwood forest areas to the site.

What to See at Emiquon: Animals

As the land returns to its former state, animals will return to Emiquon. Grassland birds such as Henslow's, grasshopper and sparrows, as well as Eastern bluebird, orioles and migrating warblers will be seen. Mammals that live in this habitat include **river otter**, muskrat, beaver, mink, raccoon and short-tailed weasel. Reptiles such as the prairie king and Western ribbon snakes, and plains leopard, Northern cricket and green frogs will be found as well.

Why The Nature Conservancy Works at Emiquon

In the early 1900s, the Illinois River was one of North America's most ecologically and economically significant river systems. It supported the most productive inland commercial fishery and highest mussel abundance per mile of any stream on the continent. Even though it has undergone significant land conversion during the past century, the river was identified by the National Research Council as one of only three large-floodplain river

Explore Related Content

Emiquon Rules and Regulations

Emiquon offers recreational opportunities requiring various permits, including fishing and hunting. [Learn more](#)

Jason's Journal

Jason Beverlin, Illinois River Program Director, brings you the latest on the Emiquon restoration. [Learn more](#)



Donate to The Nature Conservancy

When you **donate today**, you'll help The Nature Conservancy protect the most vital habitats on Earth.

DONATE NOW

Top Stories

Invasive Species for Dinner

The New York Times reports on a new culinary approach to conservation. [Dig in](#)

ecosystems in the United States that can be restored to some semblance of its outstanding biological past. By virtue of its size, optimal location and biological legacy, Emiquon significantly advances the Conservancy's efforts toward conservation of the Illinois River.

For more than 12,000 years, people have been drawn to the land now called Emiquon. And the land bears witness to the passing of 500 generations of human life, from mysterious burial mounds and ancient cemeteries to acres of modern fields of corn and soybeans. Archaeologists consider Emiquon — with more than 149 documented archaeological sites — and the lands around it, one of the richest places for discovered Native American sites in the country. It is a place of mystery and legend with strong connections to the past.

The Nature Conservancy's Work at Emiquon

The Conservancy has been committed to the preservation of the Illinois River for more than a decade. The acquisition of Emiquon enables ecological restoration of an area that is considered the linchpin for recovery of the ecosystem. The Conservancy will engage scientists, partners and the public as management issues and options for the restoration and management of Emiquon are considered.

Guided by recommendations from the Emiquon Science Advisory Council, a group of more than 40 scientists of regional and national acclaim, the Conservancy's work at Emiquon is on the leading edge of the evolving field of restoration science.

At Emiquon, the Conservancy is working with the Illinois State Water Survey and the University of Illinois to create computer models for the restoration. These models will allow Conservancy scientists to evaluate different management scenarios. For example, the Conservancy now can run models that predict where water will occur on the property, how deep it will be, how it will carry and deposit sediment and how plant communities will respond to the changes. These types of models are invaluable. They give us the ability to determine how the lands and waters of Emiquon will respond under different conditions and allow Conservancy scientists to plan for management challenges — such as excessive sedimentation — before they occur.

The Conservancy also works closely with the Illinois Natural History Survey and other partners to collect baseline data about the current state of Emiquon's species and natural communities. These monitoring activities will continue throughout the restoration and give scientists a means to measure the progress of the project.

The restoration at Emiquon also has potential benefits for the economic development and prosperity of local communities. Last spring, a Conservancy-sponsored expert on nature-based tourism began a series of meetings with local communities to help them explore the potential economic benefits that would result from increased tourism at Emiquon and along the Illinois River.

Forever Young

What does it really mean to save nature "for future generations"? [Read the blog](#)

Our Accountability

The Nature Conservancy makes careful use of your support [View our ratings](#)



Our Efficiency



- 76% Program
- 14% General Administration
- 10% Membership & Fundraising



- Careers
- Contact Us
- Help/FAQs
- For Media
- Site Map

- Privacy Policy
- Legal Disclosure
- Financials
- For Corporate Partners
- RSS

- Join
- Renew
- Gift Planning
- Carbon Calculator

Join our Community