



KNOW YOUR ABCs:  
IFCJN & IAFSM DEIJ

Theodis Pace, Illinois NAACP

Lacey Davis, American Rivers



**AMERICAN  
RIVERS**



# OBJECTIVES



Mississippi River at Alexandria by Roy Plasscheart and aerial support by LightHawk

- ❖ Who are we?
- ❖ Why did this group form?
- ❖ Why focus on flooding?
- ❖ What are our goals?
- ❖ How can you get involved?



# Illinois Floodplain Community Justice Network



Our Network organizes informal community leaders in flood prone areas to demand better projects and more equitable outcomes.

We are developing tools and resources designed for informal community organizers, like church leaders and non-profit organizations, to help them better advocate for flood mitigation projects that will help their communities.



# Illinois NAACP

**MISSION:** Our mission is to achieve equity, political rights, and social inclusion by advancing policies and practices that expand human and civil rights, eliminate discrimination, and accelerate the well-being, education, and economic security of Black people and all persons of color.

**THEORY OF CHANGE:** We are committed to a world without racism where Black people enjoy equitable opportunities in thriving communities. Our work is rooted in racial equity, civic engagement, and supportive policies and institutions for all marginalized people.





# United Congregations of Metro-East

UCM'S Mission is to be a powerful organization committed to combating the root cause of systemic injustice in our region by uniting people of faith in transforming our communities.



# Watertown Community Empowerment Coalition

The Watertown Community Empowerment Coalition creates, provides, and promotes an environment that draws upon the resources of the East Moline community to empower and enhance opportunity through assistance in education, life services, and healthy activities for the welfare of its members.



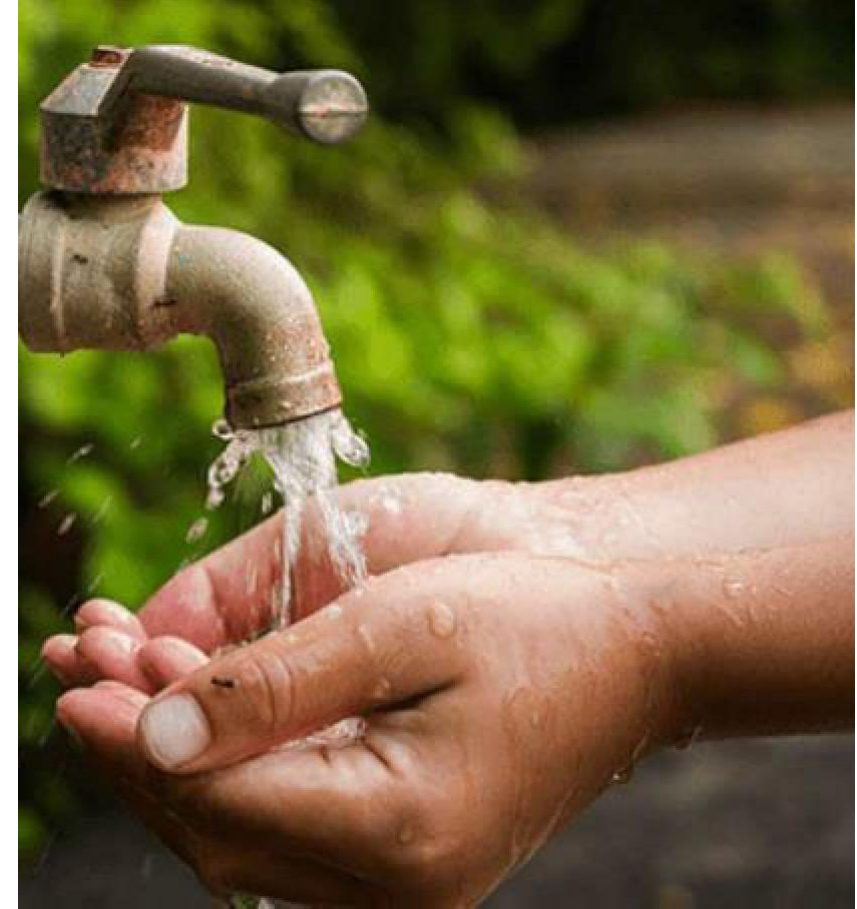




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American Rivers restores damaged rivers,  
protects wild rivers, and conserves clean  
water for people and nature.







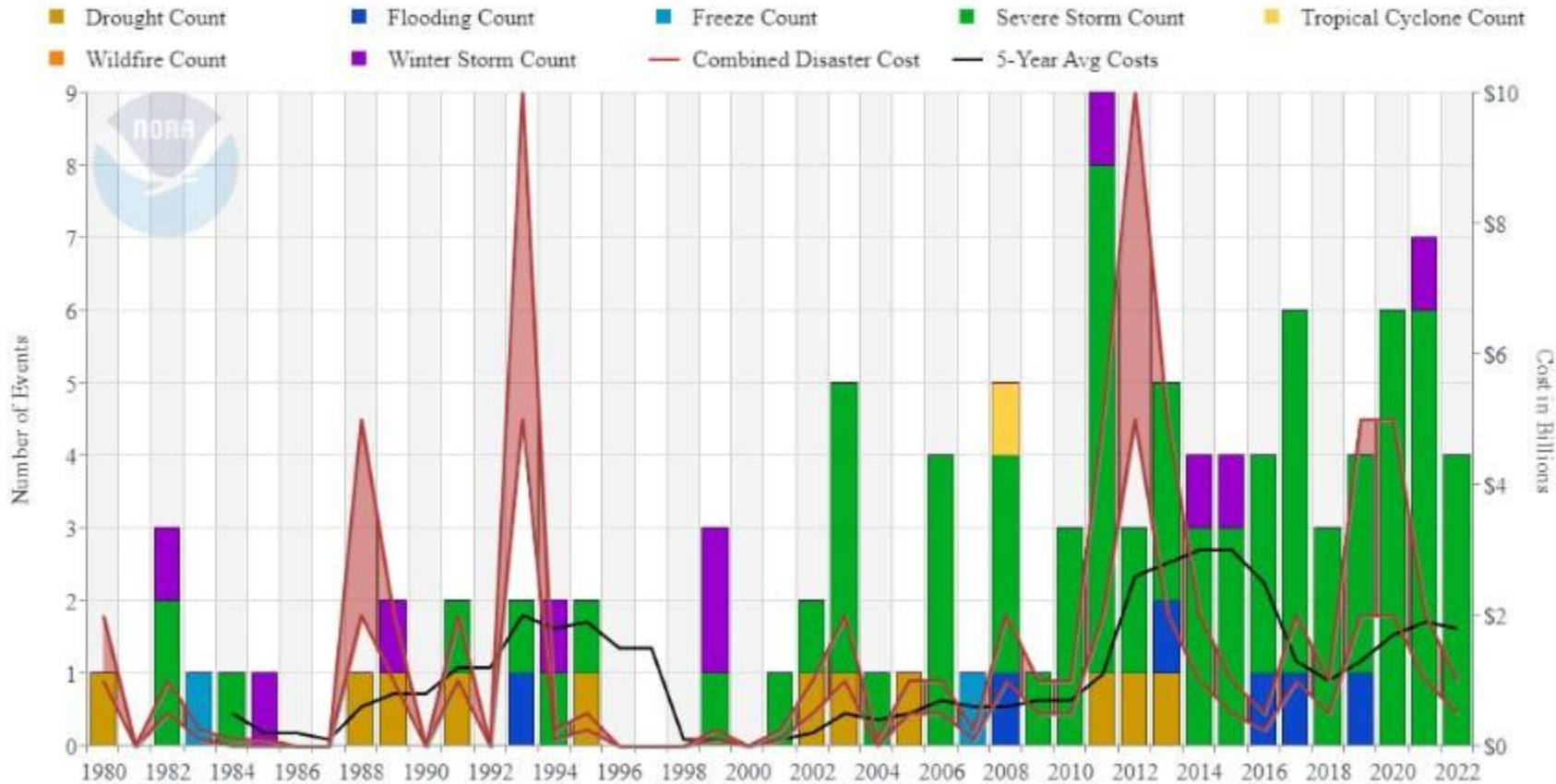
2017 flooding in downtown Alton, Illinois  
Photo credit: Andrew Dobson

## Why focus on flooding?





Illinois Billion-Dollar Disaster Events 1980-2022 (CPI-Adjusted)



Updated: January 10, 2023



90% of all natural disasters in the U.S. involve flooding (FEMA).

Flood risk reduction projects are not keeping pace as damages continue to escalate (NOAA).

d. Percentage of land improved 95 %; e. Trend of desirability next 10-15 yrs. Down

2. INHABITANTS:

a. Occupation Mixed; b. Estimated annual family income \$ 500-1200

c. Foreign-born families 10 %; Swedish & Italian predominating; d. Negro — ; — %

e. Infiltration of Above; f. Relief families Many

g. Population is increasing Yes; decreasing -; static -

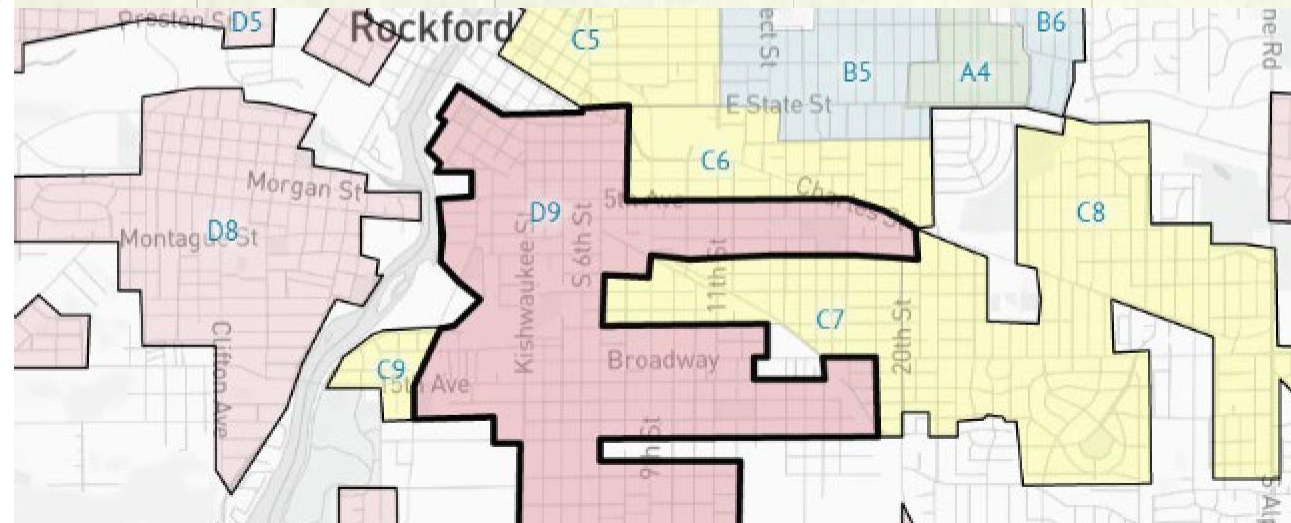
3. BUILDINGS:

a. Type

PREDOMINATING	OTHER TYPE	OTHER TYPE
<u>100</u> % <u>Singles- 2 story</u> <u>north of 12th avenue and bungalows on south</u>	<u>—</u> %	<u>—</u> %

CLARIFYING REMARKS:

Property north of Broadway better class and commands higher rental - property south is mostly 1 story bungalow type and cheaper rentals and property value Keith Creek at times overflows its banks and floods adjacent areas, however, there are improvements in process to correct this. Upkeep poor - very spotted. An old area with poor income group.



Floodplains are often environmental justice areas due to redlining that forced Black families to live in floodplains and other places with environmental hazards.







Why did this group form?



# 2020 Illinois Floodplains Work: A Feasibility Study

- NAACP Leaders
- Environmental Leaders
- Farm Leaders
- Others





# Equitable Climate Change Adaptation in Illinois

## Outcomes of 2020 Illinois Floodplains Work: A Feasibility Study

### Illinois Floodplain Community Justice Network

- Partnership with IL NAACP and other racial justice organizations
- Get information and resources to community organizers
- Document environmental injustices specific to flooding and floodplain management

### Illinois Climate Adaptation Policy and Legislation

- Coordinate with environmental and disaster management community
- Prepare for the impacts of climate change
- Equitably protect people and create jobs



# Why Community Organizers?

“Racial and ethnic minority communities are particularly vulnerable to the greatest impacts of climate change.”

- USEPA, *Climate Change and Social Vulnerability in the U.S.*

“An overwhelming number of individuals designated as emergency managers are white males.”

- Chris Brown, Emergency Management Coordinator for Virginia in a statement to Congress





# Illinois Floodplain Community Justice Network

## What are our goals?

- ❖ Network community organizers & natural hazard decision-makers
  - Community support for administrative tasks, like grant writing and project tracking, to build community capacity for multi-benefit floodplain planning
- ❖ Offer workshops, education materials, & other learning opportunities
  - Focusing community education on flood-related issues and solutions, including flood insurance rate map use and interpretation, flood insurance programs and rates, flood hazard mitigation and floodplain ecosystem services
- ❖ Take collective action to change policies and laws
  - Engaging in community visioning processes with a focus on addressing environmental justice issues like racial equity, affordable housing, storm and wastewater infrastructure
  - Uplifting community guidance for accessing appropriate resources and funding opportunities to address flood-related issues, like Silver Jackets Flood Studies, FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) grants and other resources



# Track Record of Success



- ❖ Supported outreach efforts to engage Metro East residents in the process to update the Flood Insurance Rate Maps for Monroe, St. Clair, and Madison Counties.
- ❖ Hosted a workshop and provided guidance to the Danville Branch of the NAACP on influencing the local Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan to benefit their community







Sign Up for More Information

<https://www.americanrivers.org/illinois-floodplain-community-justice-network/>



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