



HISTORY & MISSION



Living Lands & Waters (LL&W), is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization created by Quad City native, Chad Pregracke. Chad grew up in East Moline, IL, with the Mississippi River as his back yard. Through his experiences of living and working on the river, he became appalled by the amount of debris that was dumped into the river. Chad made several attempts to encourage state and federal agencies to clean up the rivers. Nothing happened. So, he decided that if no one else would clean it up, he would.

In 1997, Chad, at the age of 22, single-handedly removed over 45,000 pounds of trash from the Mississippi with a small grant from Alcoa. Shortly after he began, the media began to take note, and Chad received coverage on major networks (CNN, Fox, etc.) and publications (TIME, LIFE, People, Smithsonian, etc.) and more financial backing from international corporations.

As a result, in 1998, Chad formed Living Lands & Waters with the mission:

- to aid in the protection, preservation, and restoration of the natural environment of our nation's major rivers and their watersheds
- to expand awareness of environmental issues and responsibility encompassing our rivers
- to create a desire and opportunity for citizens to take an active role in helping to make a cleaner river environment

Since 1998, LL&W has removed close to 10 million pounds of debris that had been impairing fish, bird and wildlife habitat and polluting our waters. With a volunteer force of over 100,000 volunteers, the LL&W team has helped clean up 24 rivers in 21 states.

With full-time staff and an equipment base of five barges, two towboats, five workboats, seven trucks, a crane, an excavator, the "A-Team" bus and 2 skid loaders, Chad and his crew now live on a house barge, traveling port to port up to nine months a year hosting community-based river cleanups, tree plantings, invasive species removal events and educational workshops for educators and students. Over the last 20 years, LL&W has evolved into the only "industrial strength" river cleanup operation like it in the world, proving that "One Person Really Can Make a Difference!"

24 RIVERS - 21 STATES - OVER 116,000 VOLUNTEERS - 11 MILLION LBS OF GARBAGE