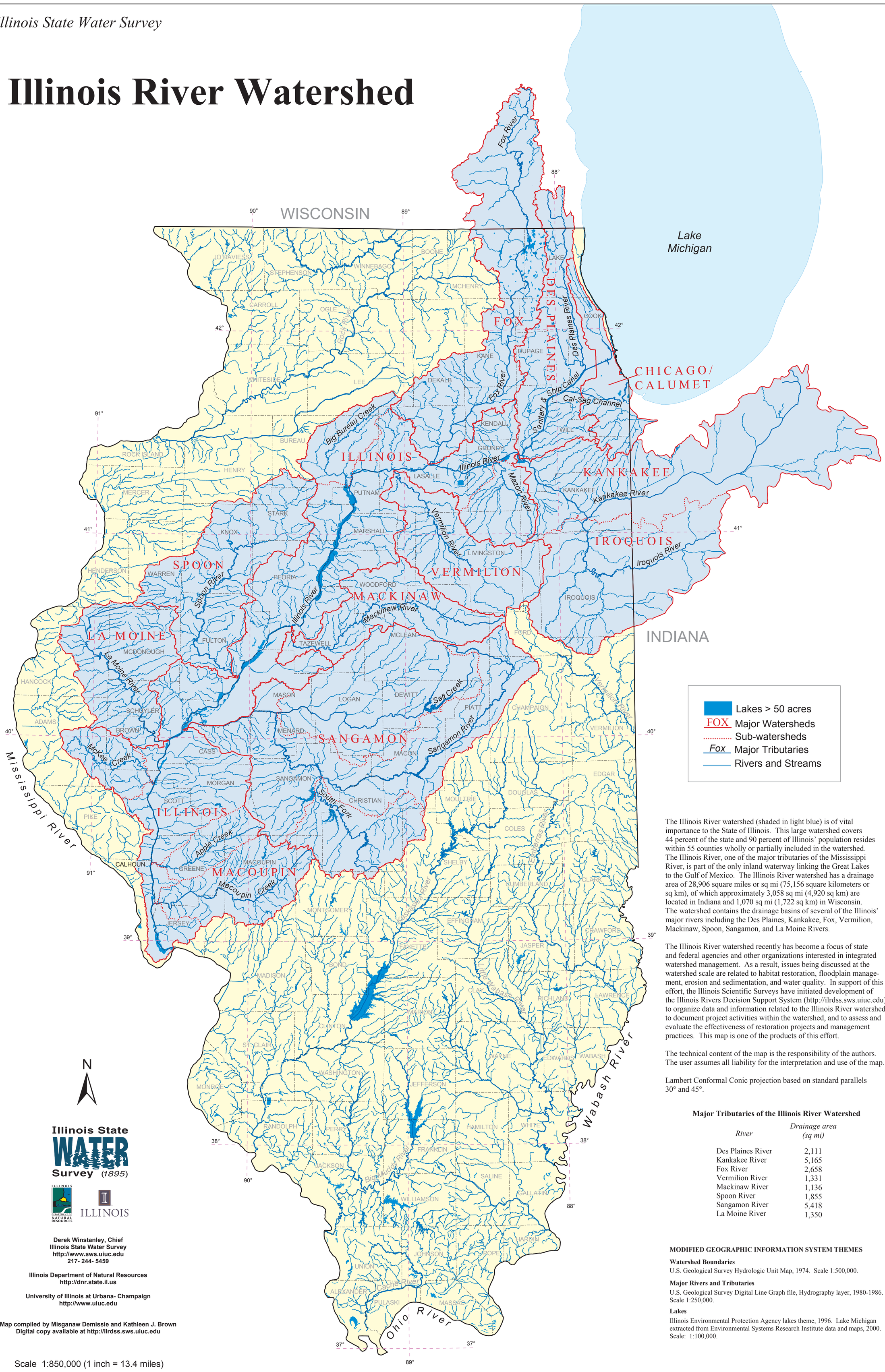
Illinois State Water Survey

Illinois River Watershed



The Illinois River watershed (shaded in light blue) is of vital importance to the State of Illinois. This large watershed covers 44 percent of the state and 90 percent of Illinois' population resides within 55 counties wholly or partially included in the watershed. The Illinois River, one of the major tributaries of the Mississippi River, is part of the only inland waterway linking the Great Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico. The Illinois River watershed has a drainage area of 28,906 square miles or sq mi (75,156 square kilometers or sq km), of which approximately 3,058 sq mi (4,920 sq km) are located in Indiana and 1,070 sq mi (1,722 sq km) in Wisconsin. The watershed contains the drainage basins of several of the Illinois' major rivers including the Des Plaines, Kankakee, Fox, Vermilion, Mackinaw, Spoon, Sangamon, and La Moine Rivers.

The Illinois River watershed recently has become a focus of state and federal agencies and other organizations interested in integrated watershed management. As a result, issues being discussed at the watershed scale are related to habitat restoration, floodplain management, erosion and sedimentation, and water quality. In support of this effort, the Illinois Scientific Surveys have initiated development of the Illinois Rivers Decision Support System (http://ilrdss.sws.uiuc.edu) to organize data and information related to the Illinois River watershed, to document project activities within the watershed, and to assess and evaluate the effectiveness of restoration projects and management practices. This map is one of the products of this effort.

The technical content of the map is the responsibility of the authors. The user assumes all liability for the interpretation and use of the map.

Lambert Conformal Conic projection based on standard parallels 30° and 45°.

Major Tributaries of the Illinois River Watershed

River	*Drainage area (sq mi)*
Des Plaines River	2,111
Kankakee River	5,165
Fox River	2,658
Vermilion River	1,331
Mackinaw River	1,136
Spoon River	1,855
Sangamon River	5,418
La Moine River	1,350

MODIFIED GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM THEMES

Watershed Boundaries
U.S. Geological Survey Hydrologic Unit Map, 1974. Scale 1:500,000.

Major Rivers and Tributaries
U.S. Geological Survey Digital Line Graph file, Hydrography layer, 1980-1986. Scale 1:250,000.

Lakes
Illinois Environmental Protection Agency lakes theme, 1996. Lake Michigan extracted from Environmental Systems Research Institute data and maps, 2000. Scale: 1:100,000.

Illinois State Water Survey (1895)

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Scale 1:850,000 (1 inch = 13.4 miles)

0 5 10 20 30 40 50 Miles

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