

## **Middlefork Audubon Society**

### **RESOLUTION**

***To address concerns over the threat of coal ash pollution of the Middle Fork of the Vermillion River, Illinois' only National Wild and Scenic River, and its impact on the flora and fauna of the river valley, as well as the recreational opportunities afforded by the river to working families of Vermillion County, the city of Danville, and beyond***

WHEREAS the Vermillion Power Station, a coal-fired power plant, was constructed along the Middle Fork of the Vermillion River in 1956 and operated for 55 years before being closed in 2011 by its current owner Dynegy Midwest Generation;

WHEREAS coal ash, the material left over after burning coal, was deposited in three coal ash pits along the west bank of the river during the coal plant's operation;

WHEREAS coal ash includes some of the most toxic substances known to human-kind, such as arsenic, mercury, lead, cadmium, selenium, chromium, and more, and the Dynegy pits now contain over 3.3 million cubic yards of toxic waste that threatens the river;

WHEREAS all three pits lie in the river's floodplain, two are unlined and actively leaking into adjacent surface and groundwater, and the third sits over mine voids, raising questions about its structural integrity;

WHEREAS the Middle Fork of the Vermillion River has for decades moved towards the banks of these three pits, causing significant streambank erosion and raising questions and concerns over a potential breach that could send millions of gallons of coal ash into this National Wild and Scenic River;

WHEREAS two such spills have occurred in recent years, including: 1) In 2008 when 5.5 million cubic yards of toxic coal ash spilled into the Clinch and Emory Rivers from a Tennessee Valley Authority coal plant. Cleanup costs to-date have exceeded \$1.2 billion.; and 2) A second spill in North Carolina in 2014 where 46,000 cubic yards of coal ash from a Duke Energy coal plant sent coal ash downstream for over 70 miles with resulting cleanup costs of tens of billions of dollars and mounting;

WHEREAS the Middle Fork of the Vermillion River passes through more than 8,400 acres of scenic park and recreational lands and is one of Central Illinois' greatest recreational assets;

WHEREAS the river, its riparian corridor, and adjacent open lands provides important high quality habitats that support a great diversity of terrestrial and aquatic flora and fauna;

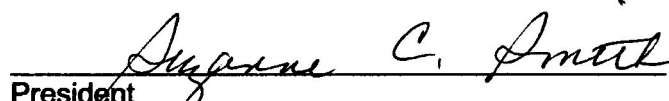
WHEREAS the Middle Fork River and surrounding natural resources offer working families many no-cost and low-cost leisure activities like fishing, hunting, paddling, birding, horseback riding and photography;

WHEREAS Vermillion County has put forward its 2025 strategic plan that capitalizes on the economic development and job creation potential afforded by the river and its adjacent open space/recreational corridor;

WHEREAS the City of Danville, the largest community in Vermilion County, is implementing a riverfront project on the edge of its downtown as a way to draw more tourists, spur more business growth, and generate new jobs in an area that for recent decades has experienced de-industrialization, job loss, property tax loss, and one of the highest unemployment rates in Illinois;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Middlefork Audubon Society is joining the growing number of organizations asking for the Illinois EPA to require Dynegy Midwest Generation to protect the social, economic, and environmental interests of Vermilion County and the City of Danville by moving the three coal ash pits out of the floodplain of the Middle Fork of the Vermilion River to a properly constructed and lined location on its property, away from this high quality stream.

PRESENTED, APPROVED, AND RESOLVED by Middlefork Audubon Society on this 30th day of March 2017.

  
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President  
Middlefork Audubon Society