



# HISTORY & MISSION

Living Lands & Waters (LL&W), is a 501 (c)3 non-profit organization founded by Quad City native, Chad Pregracke. Chad grew up in East Moline, IL, with the Mississippi River as his backyard. Through his experiences of living and working on the river, he became appalled by the amount of debris on the shorelines. 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.

**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 over 14 million pounds of debris through hard work and people power that had been impairing wildlife habitat and polluting our waters. With a volunteer force of over 139,000 volunteers, the LL&W team has helped clean up 33 rivers in 23 states.

With a full-time staff and an equipment base that includes five barges, two towboats, five work boats, a DJ boat, an excavator, a dump truck, and two skid loaders, Chad and his crew now live on a house barge, traveling port to port up to nine months a year. They host community-based river cleanups, tree plantings, invasive species removal events, and educational workshops. Over the last 28 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!

LL&W has continued to build on momentum through community action and engagement. The organization's impeccable safety record underscores its commitment to maintaining high standards while achieving its environmental goals. Truly, green is the new red, white, and blue, as LL&W inspires a national movement towards environmental stewardship and responsibility.

[Click here to see Living Lands & Waters in action!](#)

**14,190,723**  
**POUNDS REMOVED**

**139,854**  
**VOLUNTEERS ENGAGED**

**31,002**  
**STUDENTS EDUCATED**

**2,496,684**  
**TREES PLANTED**

