



LOVE

A Day in the Life of

# Living Lands and Waters

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While his name may not be Huck or Tom and he is by no means a work of fiction, Chad Pegracke is every bit an American icon. A young man full of endless passion, energy and pluck (yes, pluck), who decided one day, while he was still in his teens, that he wanted to clean up our country’s major rivers and watersheds. So on a fateful Thursday morning, Chad set off in his tiny boat down the Mississippi and by day’s end he had hauled in a culvert pipe, a refrigerator, three barrels, and as many bottles and cans as his boat would hold. Ten years, six rivers, and millions of pounds of trash later, Chad and his organization, Living Lands and Waters, have through sheer determination, thousands of volunteers, and a drive to do the right thing—transformed rivers teeming with waste into the beautiful treasures they were intended to be. On the following pages, you’ll get a sense of how one man’s dream has become a national crusade. You’ll also get a sense of how this adventure-filled story prints on Lustro Offset Environmental (LOE). Our new paper that embodies Sappi’s passion for protecting our environment while preserving the quality and beauty inherent in a great sheet of paper.

Since this is really Chad’s story...we thought it would be a good idea to let him tell it to you in his own words.





This is the best part of my job—just having a moment out here where everything is so beautiful... it helps me remember what I'm in this for.





Our house boat—where all of us sleep—was an old, abandoned headquarters for a barge company. Pretty wild...Anyway, after breakfast, we start getting the boats ready with shovels, gas, water—everything we need for the day's cleanup.



Heading about 7 or 8 miles up the Ohio River. We'll load up as much garbage as possible by noon—bring the garbage back to the barge to unload, break for lunch and head out again.







Because it costs money to get rid of a refrigerator, 99% of people just dump them. We picked up three that morning alone—along with tires, gas cans, barrels, water heaters, canoes and a couple bowling balls.





It sounds corny but we function like a family. So yes, it's rough. And yes it's harsh and brutal and hot and you're always tired and hungry. But, we're all in this thing together—if we didn't believe in what we were doing, we could never hack this life.

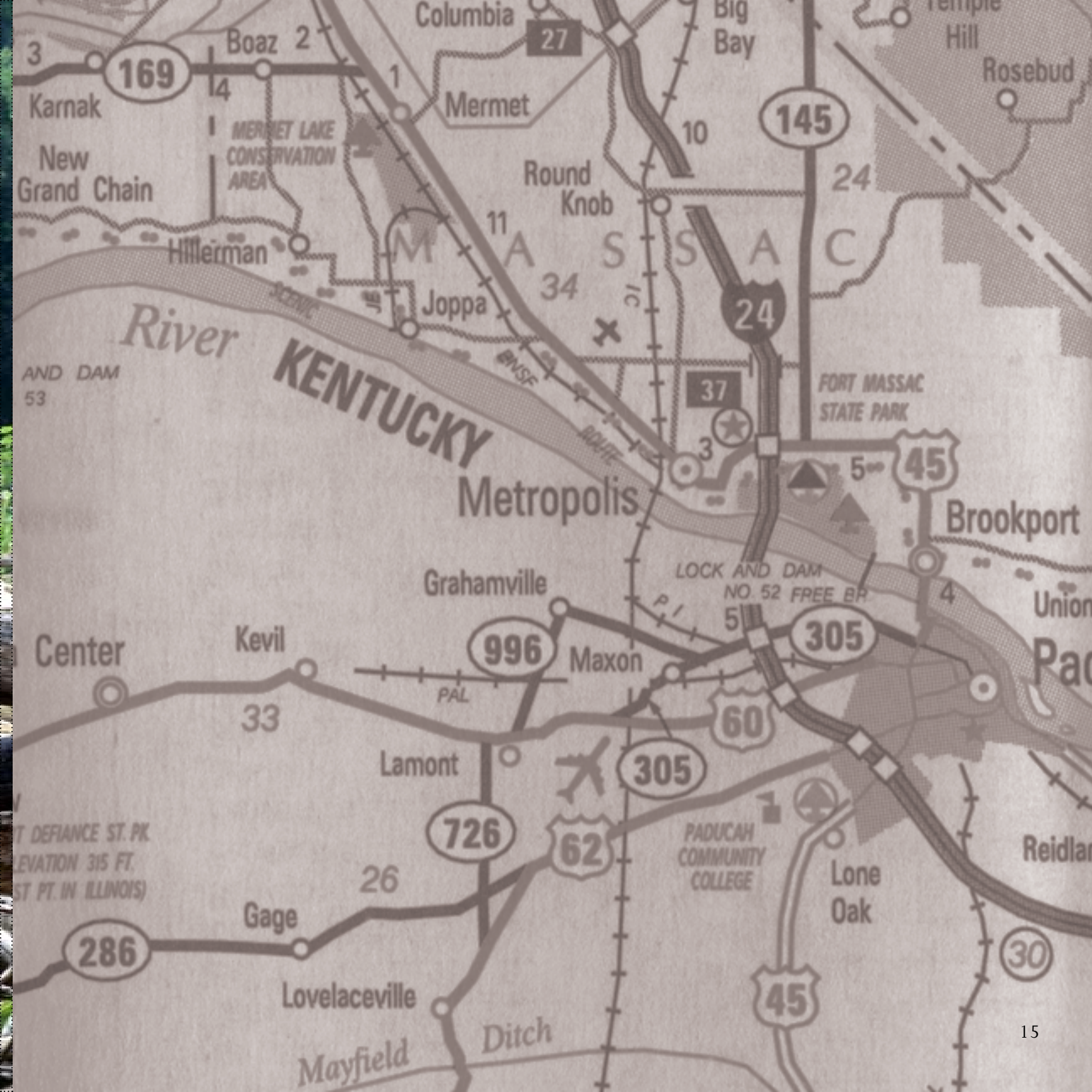


Over the years, I've collected hundreds of "messages in a bottle." It's hard to throw away somebody's dream.





This clean-up began in Olmstead, Illinois—20 miles up from where the Mississippi and Ohio rivers meet. We've been held up here for 25 days because of dangerous flooding on the Mississippi. Good news is, we've cleaned up nearly 100 miles of shoreline on both sides of the river.







**Mike Hadley**

Mike helped me restore our house barge back in 2003 and has been with me ever since. This guy can do anything—carpentry, electrical work. He's awesome.

**Chad Pregracke**

I think you got enough on me.

**Chris Thunderson**

Chris is our Operations guy. He builds and fixes all our boats. A talent which comes in pretty handy when you're on the water 8 months of the year.

**Jen Branstetter**

Jen got her degree in Hotel Management—took a job in the industry—hated it—quit—and never looked back.

**Tony Borreson**

Tony's the newbie of our crew. He's been with us only two weeks after getting his Journalism degree. I have a feeling he's gonna be here a while.

**Shannon Reinke**

Shannon was a classmate of Jen and Kristen's at the University of Missouri. Right now she's just interning with us—but she's got the heart and soul for this job.

I've hired about 80 different people over the years.

These guys are the 7 who are full-time members of the team now (Tammy's missing from the shot.) We're all standing in a log jam—where a log runs into a tree and creates, well, a jam—it took two days to clear this 1/2 city block area where we collected a couple tons of garbage.

**Kristen Ellis**

Kristen has been with Living Lands for 2 1/2 years. She's in charge of our new tree planting project and sets up all our clean-ups in the summer.



Most people think we just pick up garbage. They forget what the garbage does to the wildlife in the rivers. A single car tire contains 7 gallons of petroleum, a fridge's compressor is loaded with PCB's—and we collect thousands of these a year.





Heading back with everybody else for lunch. Truth is, I'm not thinking about garbage—I'm thinking frozen pizza.







In the afternoon, it all begins again. When we unload the garbage we sort out the recyclable from the non-recyclable before we put it all on a barge and eventually get it to a recycling facility or landfill.





You can't imagine what it feels like to see land that was once covered in garbage completely clean...They say you get a great sense of satisfaction after cleaning your house—imagine what it feels like to clean your country.





After we're done unloading and sorting, we all just chill. Most of us just jump in the river to clean off. Some grab food, others get on the internet. There's no big group hug or high-five-ing going on...we all just want to relax.









Everybody has their own way of unwinding after such an intense day of work. And we all just respect that about each other.







This is my work. And, I'm like everybody else—every now and then I like to take a step back and take a look at the results of my labor. Finance guys look at the money they've made. Designers look at their designs. I look out at the river.







I set out 10 years ago to help clean up the Mississippi River. It's hard to believe what we've accomplished in just a decade. Thing is, there's so much work ahead of us...so many miles left to go. I guess that's what drives all of us. Or at least me. Why do I spend my life picking up garbage? I don't have any poetic answer to that. I'm the last guy who's gonna go around saying things like "I do this' cause the river runs through my veins." I guess to me, the river means...well, I guess it represents freedom. And I guess protecting our freedom just feels like the right thing for me to do with my life.

*Gar Be*





Living Lands and Waters is devoted to protecting, preserving and restoring the natural environment of our country's major rivers and watersheds. The organization got its start back in 1997 when a local boy, Chad Pegracke, decided to do something about the garbage that had accumulated along the riverbanks of the Mississippi. He began by cleaning up 100 miles of Mississippi shoreline and collecting and recycling over 45,000 pounds of debris. The following year, when he graduated college, he mounted the largest cleanup in the history of the Mississippi—eventually removing 400,000 pounds of trash from an area between St. Louis, MO and Guttenburg, IA. He then moved onto the Illinois River, Ohio River and Missouri River. Relying mostly on volunteers—since the organization currently numbers 8—Chad also started education workshops by building a floating classroom on his barge to educate hundreds of teachers and, in turn, thousands of children on the importance of protecting our waterways. Ten years later, LL&W has cleaned up hundreds of thousands of tons of garbage. Even more impressive, thanks to their undying passion and various conservation programs, thousands of Americans now feel a greater sense of responsibility for preserving our rivers and the land surrounding them.

Chad has gained national recognition for his work-- receiving everything from the Jefferson Award for Public Service (the equivalent of the Nobel for Public Service)—to being a spokesperson at the World Summit on Sustainable Environments in South Africa. This is truly a great American story of one young, charismatic man making a huge difference in our world.

To see how you can help make a difference by supporting Living Lands and Waters—either financially or by participating in one of their cleanups--please visit their website at

<http://www.livinglandsandwaters.org>

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