



# Friends of the Mississippi River

Working to protect the Mississippi River and its watershed in the Twin Cities area

[www.fmr.org](http://www.fmr.org)

Fall 2006

## Jewels of the Mississippi

*Riverfront parks are gaining ground in the metro area*

by sue rich

In 1988, Congress designated the 72-mile stretch of river from Anoka to Hastings as the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (MNRRA). Much like Yosemite or the Grand Canyon, MNRRA is an official unit of the National Park Service. However, says MNRRA Landscape Architect and Park Planner Susan Overson, it operates under a different model. It is a “partnership park,” meaning the National Park Service stewards the land in partnership with local communities and citizen groups.

Citizens, it turns out, have been up for the task. By leveraging the MNRRA designation and other resources, and forging strong private-public-nonprofit alliances, many river-corridor communities are slowly returning industrial or neglected riverfront lands to their former glory. This article highlights three new or recently dedicated riverfront parks that provide critical habitat for birds and other wildlife and serve as a reminder that, at least in some places, concrete is losing ground.

### Above the Falls/Edgewater Park River Mile 856

Thanks to the dedication of green-thirsty citizens, not all parts of the Minneapolis riverfront are coming up condos.

Located just south of bustling Lowry Avenue in northeast Minneapolis, new Edgewater Park offers residents and visitors a bit of urban respite. Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Planner Nick Eoloff simply describes the multi-faceted park as “a quiet place to view the river.”

That said, first visitors may be treated to the occasional sounds of construction. While trails, which mimic the river’s wending ways, have been completed, work on the circular riverfront plaza they lead to is currently in progress. And



Construction of a Mississippi River overlook was underway this summer at the new Edgewater Park in northeast Minneapolis. In addition to great views, park visitors can enjoy trails, plantings, innovative stormwater treatment features and a restored shoreline.

Photo courtesy of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board.

if visitors investigate the bluff—which has been stabilized with a new retaining wall and vegetation—they may also find workers creating an overlook atop the old foundation of the park’s namesake, the Edgewater Inn. Eoloff expects the overlook to be completed “by the time the snow flies” in late November.

Edgewater has a lot to offer within its 2.5 acres, including a prairie area, historical interpretive signage and a more urban section reminiscent of the street grid of the city. The park’s development also has a more subtle form of interpretation—it demonstrates several innovative approaches to managing stormwater runoff, including different kinds of porous pavement, shoreline restoration and buffer plantings, and grassy areas for water storage and infiltration during storms. The park’s unique stormwater features were made possible through funding from the Mississippi Watershed Management Organization.

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We’ve Moved!  
Giving Back

360 N. Robert  
Street, Suite 400  
Saint Paul, MN  
55101  
651-222-2193  
651-222-6005 (f)  
info@fmr.org

## From the Director

If you've been paying much attention to Friends of the Mississippi River's work on riverfront development issues lately, you probably have a pretty good idea of what we're against, but you may still be wondering what kind of development along the river we support.



Whitney Clark,  
Executive Director

### Mission

*Friends of the Mississippi River (FMR) advocates a new vision for the Mississippi, especially the river and its watershed in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Through active leadership and education, FMR seeks to preserve and restore the river's fish and wildlife, its vital floodplains and scenic bluffs, its natural and cultural treasures, its beauty and its romance. We envision a river on which small boats are safe and welcome, to which we have clear and easy access and in which we can safely swim and fish. We envision a river that is cleaner, healthier, more alive and more inviting, a river no one can ignore or take for granted.*

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FMR believes development along the river can deliver many important benefits both to the river and to the community. River-adjacent residential development creates a built-in constituency of citizens who use the river, care about it and will speak up and take action to defend it. Also, most parks advocates believe that having homes adjacent to public parkland makes the parks safer.

FMR also believes that limited commercial use of the riverfront can enhance the public's experience of the river. River-related or river-compatible land uses such as restaurants, coffee/ice cream shops, bike shops, interpretive centers and marinas are examples of development that can add vitality to the riverfront if sensitively designed and properly located.

Over the years, FMR has actively worked to promote river-friendly developments. In north Minneapolis, FMR has led an effort to convert the city-owned Upper Harbor Terminal from heavy industrial use to housing and a new riverfront park. In St. Paul Park, we've collaborated with the U of M's Metropolitan Design Center to demonstrate how the city could cluster housing units along the river to maximize density while protecting public open space. And this fall I was pleased to speak at the ground breaking and welcome for the new "West-Side Flats" condominiums being built by developer George Sherman.

FMR has been at the center of some recent high profile debates about what type of development is appropriate along the river. From the floodwall around St. Paul's downtown airport – Holman Field, to the football stadium on Nicollet Island in Minneapolis and, most recently, the proposed mega-development on St. Paul's West Side Flats – The Bridges of Saint Paul, we've responded to proposals that we believe would harm the river.

Here are key principles FMR believes should be considered as we redevelop along the river:

- **Protect Ecological Functions.** Developments should not degrade – and when possible they should enhance – the land's

ecological functions such as flood storage, groundwater recharge, habitat and stormwater filtration.

- **Improve Public Access.** The Mississippi River belongs to everyone. Wherever possible, public ownership of the riverfront should ensure public access and use. Projects that convert public land to private or that create physical or visual barriers to the river should be discouraged.

- **Maintain Scenic Character.** The unique scenic character of the Mississippi River is an asset to the communities through which it flows. Views to and from the river are one of those hard-to-quantify values that give people a sense of place. These scenic views belong to the public but are often what developers try to capture and sell. Determining whether a proposed development would degrade the river's scenic character is highly site specific. Tall buildings in one location might have an insignificant visual impact or they may stand out like a sore thumb.

- **Preserve Cultural Resources.** The Mississippi traces a rich vein of historically significant sites throughout the Twin Cities, places that provide a link to our community's past. Where possible, new development should preserve historic buildings, streets and landscape forms, which can often be incorporated or adapted to a new use. At a minimum, alternatives should be vigorously explored before permanently destroying historic features.

At FMR, we understand that land use changes are inevitable and necessary. At the same time, citizens, acting through their local elected officials, have a right and a duty to consider how proposed developments impact community assets that are held in the public trust. FMR's mission is to be a thoughtful and responsible voice for the river, which cannot speak for itself, and for underrepresented constituencies affected by land-use planning and decision-making. The impacts of such actions will affect the health of the great river and our community's relationship to it for years to come.

# Program Highlights

## Many hands restore oak savanna in Minneapolis

Thanks to the collaboration of many partner organizations and countless hours of volunteer service during the past ten years, the area near 36th Street and West River Parkway in Minneapolis is showing signs of renewed life. Many residents in gorge neighborhoods have not-so-distant memories of this area as a buckthorn thicket.

Owned by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB), this area of the river gorge is part of the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (MNRRA), a unit of the National Park Service that stretches from Anoka to Hastings. The 36th Street site contains relatively high quality areas of oak forest, oak woodland and a remnant mesic prairie.

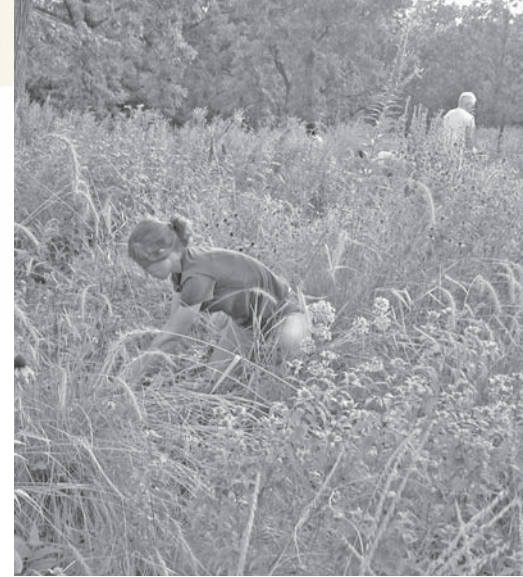
Although MPRB began burning the bowl-shaped remnant prairie in the mid-1970s, a \$60,000 grant from MNRRA in 1996 enabled the board to conduct a major restoration of the prairie and ten acres of oak savanna around it. Continued care, maintenance and planning for the site have been carried out through a collaboration between the MPRB, Longfellow Community Council, FMR, Great River Greening and many others. FMR's Gorge Stewards volunteers have embraced this and other restoration areas in the past five years by participating in hands-on stew-

ardship activities and strengthening their ties to the gorge through interpretive events.

The remnant prairie at this site also received a boost when MPRB staff performed a controlled burn last April. Controlled or prescribed burning is a technique often used in prairie restoration. A natural part of prairie ecology, burning can stimulate the germination of desirable plants, control competing vegetation and perpetuate fire-dependent native species.

This summer, Carolyn Carr of Ecological Strategies led volunteers in continued maintenance at the portion of the site being restored to oak savanna. These Oak Savanna Workdays provided an opportunity to learn more about this site, a special place for residents of gorge neighborhoods and thousands of annual visitors. Since May, nearly 100 volunteers have participated.

For more information about volunteer opportunities, contact sue rich at srich@fmr.org or 651.222.2193 x14.



Volunteers collect seed and plant native species in the oak savanna area of the gorge near 36th Street and West River Parkway in Minneapolis. Photo by Elizabeth Storey

*Funding for the Gorge Stewards and FMR's restoration work at the 36th Street Oak Savanna is provided by the Mississippi Watershed Management Organization, the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund, the Mississippi River Fund and Patagonia.*

## FMR works to strengthen Vermillion standards

FMR's work in the Vermillion Watershed dates back almost a decade, when we first began working to preserve what is now one of the only healthy trout streams in any urbanized area in the nation.

We recognized, along with local leaders, that unless something was done to protect this resource, development would eventually push the river's fragile ecosystem too far.

Today, as new watershed protection plans have progressed, FMR has been the leader in advocating for strong stormwater and stream buffer protections across the watershed. Current protection plans, which FMR was influential in developing, represent a vast improvement to stream protections throughout the watershed.

Our efforts culminated in mailings to local officials and thousands of coal-

ition members, media coverage and hundreds of public and written comments on watershed protection standards by citizens and other nonprofit groups. This is a testament to FMR's organizing efforts in the watershed and the effectiveness of citizen-based organizing and advocacy.

FMR's leadership has allowed our members and our partners to play a key role in ensuring the long-term protection of our prized Vermillion River.

Vermillion Stream Buffer Protections	Initial Proposal	Post-FMR Advocacy
Vermillion Main Branch – Lower Portion	35 ft	150 ft
Vermillion Main Branch – Upper Portion	35 ft	150 ft
Principal Connectors	35 ft	100 ft average
Tributary Connectors	35 ft	50 ft average
Water Quality Corridors	Voluntary	30 ft average

# Program Updates

## Riverfront roundup

Advertisements for “River Living” and “River Lifestyle” appear frequently in the Twin Cities’ media outlets, demonstrating that in spite of a softening market for new housing, development pressure in the Mississippi River Corridor continues to flourish. The metropolitan stretch of the Mississippi is designated as a State Critical Area, and FMR works alongside citizens in communities up and down the river to ensure that new development is carried out in accordance with the protections required by state law. Our advocacy work focuses on protecting the unique natural, scenic, cultural, historic and recreational assets of the river corridor. Following is a brief update on several issues in which we are currently engaged. Please contact Irene Jones at 651-222-2193 x11 or [ijones@fmr.org](mailto:ijones@fmr.org) to learn more or get involved.

**Saint Paul River Corridor Zoning Regulations.** A citizen task force has presented to the City Council a set of major revisions to St. Paul’s river corridor zoning regulations. FMR supports the new zoning because it limits building heights in the floodplain and on bluffs, and it has more protections in place for restoring shoreline, preserving trees and native vegetation and requiring dedication of parkland. The Planning Commission will hold a public hearing this winter prior to the council’s taking formal action to adopt the new zoning code.

**The Bridges of Saint Paul.** FMR has been working closely with others from around Saint Paul to coordinate the broad-based opposition to the proposed mega-development, The Bridges of Saint Paul. West Side Citizens Organization (WSCO), FMR and twenty-six other organizations are opposed to The Bridges because it goes against the community’s plan, would cut off river views and access and would cause economic harm to downtown and other parts of the city. A formal proposal to adopt new zoning for the site has been rejected by the St. Paul Planning Commission and is likely to be turned down by the City Council in November.

**Holman Field Floodwall.** The Metropolitan Airport Commission’s plans to build a 1.9 mile-long dike around the St. Paul Airport are going forward, in spite of opposition

by the surrounding neighborhoods and numerous groups. The St. Paul Planning Commission’s approval of this project has been appealed twice to the city council in the past three months. In round one, the council and Mayor Chris Coleman sided with neighborhood and environmental groups, asking for a design that would limit impacts to the river and shoreline. Unfortunately, the revised design was not much of an improvement over the original, but just enough to gain needed votes from the council and mayor.

**River’s Edge – Grey Cloud Island Township.** An annexation dispute over 300 acres along the river in south Washington County – land slated for the River’s Edge development – is now in its seventh year. Grey Cloud Island Township appealed a recent district court decision to annex the land into St. Paul Park to the Minnesota Court of Appeals. Although there has been a long drawn-out fight with the landowner, both the city and township have learned a lot about the importance of protecting the river and ways to achieve that goal. In the coming months, FMR will work with citizens and other natural resource groups to encourage enforcement of state guidelines for development in this part of the Mississippi River Critical Area, regardless of whether the land ends up in the city or remains in the township.

**Athletic Facility – Nicollet Island.** DeLaSalle High School’s controversial proposal to build a large athletic complex on Nicollet Island has undergone a series of ups and downs this fall. In August, the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) voted unanimously to deny the project because it is inappropriate for the St. Anthony Falls Historic District. FMR coordinated a coalition that included the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota, Sierra Club Northstar Chapter and local citizens to provide testimony opposing the proposal. After vindication by a strong decision at the HPC, the Minneapolis City Council overturned that decision in September. The project still needs several approvals, but appears to have the votes it needs. A local citizens’ group filed a lawsuit in October to stop the project. Stay tuned.

FMR removed extensive amounts of non-native pine trees to restore the Sand Coulee’s original dry prairie landscape.

Photo by Karen Schik

## Sand Coulee Restoration: A remnant of our prairie heritage

Southeast of Hastings in Dakota County, unbeknownst to most people, sits a valley that contains one of the largest and highest quality prairies in the Twin Cities area. Known locally as the Sand Coulee, this dry prairie provides a glimpse of how landscape of southern and western Minnesota appeared hundreds of years ago. For five years, FMR has been working with several landowners in the Coulee to protect and improve the health of this native prairie. “The Coulee is home to a number of rare species,” explains Tom Lewanski, FMR’s conservation director. “We want to ensure they will continue to have high quality habitat well into the future.”

With over 150 plant species and at least 40 bird species – including such unusual ones as lark sparrow, orchard oriole and grasshopper sparrows – the Coulee harbors a diverse and unique community. Thirteen rare plant and animal species have been recorded, including the endangered James’s polanisia.

The Coulee has been transformed in recent years by removal of extensive amounts of planted pine and other trees. In 2006, FMR removed additional trees, controlled exotic forbs and conducted prescribed burns, made possible with funding from the Private Stewardship Grant Program of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and from the DNR’s Metro Greenways Program. “By removing woody plants and doing prescribed burning, we mimic the natural processes of the prairie,” explains FMR Ecologist Karen Schik. Restoration efforts have expanded from the prairie itself to the adjacent oak forest, which is overgrown with exotic shrub species. Restoring those areas not only improves them for wildlife and helps preserve the plant composition, but also creates a buffer for the prairie.

In 2006, more landowners have become involved in the project, including the City of Hastings, which owns 25 acres in the Coulee. Schik developed two additional prairie stewardship plans for landowners in the Coulee.



Mark your calendars  
for next year's event:  
August 4 & 5, 2007

# Mississippi River Challenge

August 5 & 6, 2006

Paddle it. Protect it.



**A huge thank you to everyone who played a role in the success of the 2006 Minnesota Chiropractic Association Mississippi River Challenge!** All of us at Friends of the Mississippi River greatly appreciate the efforts and support of nearly 300 paddlers,

over 100 volunteers, thousands of pledge donors and dozens of sponsors that made the event not only possible but fun as well.

2006 Challenge participants experienced great weekend weather – lots of sun with some cooling breezes. The headwind on the first day was no match for our intrepid paddlers. And two-day paddlers were rewarded with a nice tailwind on the Sunday stretch of the river.

The celebration and overnight at Fort Snelling were once again highlights of the event, with a marvelous performance

by the Chris Silver Band, announcement of the canoe and kayak winners and a number of paddlers relaxing under the big tent until, well, almost the wee hours of the morning.

Paddlers raised over \$85,000 this year in pledges – the largest amount in the three-year history of the event! These funds will go a long way to support FMR's programs and projects along the Twin Cities stretch of the river. In addition, with media sponsorship and paddler word-of-mouth, the 2006 Challenge raised awareness community-wide of the need to protect this amazing stretch of river.

Thank you again to everyone who helped make this year's Mississippi River Challenge a great event. If you have feedback that will help us make next year's event even better, please take a moment to complete the online evaluation ([www.MississippiRiverChallenge.org](http://www.MississippiRiverChallenge.org)) or e-mail [kyanisch@fmr.org](mailto:kyanisch@fmr.org).

Thanks!

## 2006 Minnesota Chiropractic Association Mississippi River Challenge Sponsors

- |                             |                                |                               |                                      |
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Above: A bird's eye view of paddlers in the gorge area of the river; and voyageurs climb out of their boat at a rest stop. Below: Paddlers leave Lock and Dam No. 1 on the first day; and Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak greets visitors at Islands of Peace Park. Photos by Greg Lecker and FMR volunteers.



Continued from cover

For river enthusiasts, this little park heralds big riverfront changes to come. The Edgewater site is part of the larger vision for Minneapolis' Upper River area set forth in "Above the Falls: A Master Plan for the Upper River in Minneapolis." The Above the Falls plan, which covers Minneapolis' riverfront north of Plymouth Avenue, involved a broad cross-section of the communities it serves. The award-winning plan emphasizes eco-friendly amenities, continuous parks and trails along both sides of the river and improved community-to-river connections.



A view of the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary, created through the work of more than 20 organizations, including FMR. Photo courtesy of MNRRA

## More riverfront parks to check out

### Pine Bend Bluffs Scientific & Natural Area

Tucked between Highway 52 and the Mississippi in Inver Grove Heights, Pine Bend SNA rewards only those who seek it and, as an SNA that offers minimal trails and no amenities, it feels even further off the beaten track.

This rare dry gravel prairie and mesic oak savanna bluff is home to several rare plants, such as Kitten-tails and James's Polanisia, and provides critical habitat for many migratory and resident birds. It has a stunning Lower Mississippi overlook one must simply visit to appreciate.

### River Park

The City of Brooklyn Park has been working with Great River Greening, MNRRA and scores of volunteers to transform traditionally maintained city parkland into restored prairie and oak forest, interpretive gardens and a rain-garden-like stormwater system.

Open daily, 6 a.m.-midnight, the park is just east of West River Road at 200 81st Ave. N. in Brooklyn Park. For more information, contact the City of Brooklyn Park at 763-493-8333.

### Anoka County Regional Park

At one end of this park lies a boat launch ramp, at the other is the almost hidden Arboretum Trail. This 1/3-mile trail traverses a bucolic prairie grassland that winds in and around a variety of Minnesota trees – birch, pine, spruce, oak, maple, ash and linden – each marked with a sign.

The park stretches from 39th Ave. N.E. north past the I-694 bridge. The Grand Round Trail runs through the park as a critical link to the North Mississippi River Regional Corridor Trail system. The Grand Round Trail connects with Islands of Peace Park and East Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park.

### Wildflower Levee Park

Recently constructed as a quiet rest area along the Mississippi River, South Saint Paul's Wildflower Levee Park offers excellent views of the waters and the wildlife that frequent them. Levee trails connect 6.5 miles of riverfront, including upstream Kaposia Park and Simon's Ravine Trailhead.

The park area is accessible only by foot, located south of the Spiral Bridge at Hardman and Grand Aves. in South St. Paul, north of the I-494 bridge.

Sources: Brooklyn Park, South Saint Paul and Anoka County web sites.

Turning industrial or neglected lands into green-space is never easy. But when high resident involvement is a priority and there are many residents to include, it can take many years for the machinery of democracy to kick into gear before land ownership and reclamation efforts can even begin. "Planning for the Upper River in Minneapolis has been a long process that has involved many voices and perspectives," reports Irene Jones, FMR's outreach director. "And it's great to see some of that energy turn into results as new riverfront park development like Edgewater finally takes shape."

Across the river and a bit south, new parks and trails will be developed in the coming year between Plymouth Ave. and the railroad bridge just north of Broadway. Jones served on the Above the Falls Phase I Task Force that guided the park development plan for this area, which includes over a mile of new riverfront park and parkway, biking and walking trails that connect to the river and points south, enhanced treatment of bridgeheads, rain gardens, natural plantings, overlooks, picnic areas and a restored, stabilized shoreline.

"The neighborhoods on the north side of Minneapolis have waited a long time to see parks and trails become a reality on the upper river,"

says Jones. "Phase I of the Above the Falls Plan is a very exciting step forward for the community."

### Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary River Mile 838

Part preserve, part park and part historical site, the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary is as diverse as those who came together to create it.

Over 20 organizations helped create this 27-acre park, located just east of Saint Paul's Lowertown neighborhood at the foot of Dayton's Bluff (which is both the name of the geologic formation and of the St. Paul East Side neighborhood atop and surrounding it). Partners included the DNR, MNRRA, City of St. Paul, Lowertown Redevelopment Corp., Trust for Public Land and Minnesota Environmental Initiative, just to name a few.

However, project organizers say the site would still be a neglected rail yard site if it weren't for the most important group of all: dedicated community members.

Inspired by their success in improving Swede Hollow Park, in the early '90s Dayton's Bluff residents turned their eyes towards the river. They did not like what they saw. As resident Carol Carey put it, the land between the community and the river was "pretty much a dump."

However, where others saw discarded refrigerators and creosote-laden railroad ties, these community members saw potential greenspace and the chance to reconnect their neighborhood to the river. In 1997, they founded the Lower Phalen Creek Project, named for the tributary that runs through Saint Paul's East Side, to realize that vision.

Today, Carey, now executive director of Historic St. Paul, Inc., and chair of the Lower Phalen Creek Project Steering Committee, extols the area that was once a dump. There is truly something for everyone. History buffs can see the cave where beer was stored by the North Star brewery in the 1850s or view Carver's Cave/Wakan Tipi, a sacred Dakota site and landmark for early European explorers. Birdwatchers can look for fall warblers, hawks and other birds along this major

migration corridor, while plant-lovers can explore the site's spring-fed wetlands or enjoy the restored native plantings (many of which were planted by the Community Design Center's East Side Youth Conservation Corps.) Or one could simply stand there and let the sight of the towering sandstone bluffs take their breath away.

While drastic change is evident, the sanctuary remains a work in progress. A trail connection linking the sanctuary and the Dayton's Bluff neighborhood to St. Paul's Lowertown district, Swede Hollow and Mounds Park is being completed this summer. Interpretive signs are in the works and over the long term, community members envision an interpretive center and direct connection from the sanctuary to the Mississippi River.

Carey and myriad others are undaunted by the work ahead. They have faith in the bedrock strength of the community and their network of partners. Said Carey, whenever the group encountered difficulties along the way, there was always somebody who stepped up and said 'We'll take care of it'.

### **Hastings River Flats Park River Mile 815**

Downstream of Pine Bend, near Lock and Dam No. 2, FMR has helped the City of Hastings turn an oil-refinery tank farm and degraded lakeshore into a wet prairie and wet meadow.

In 2002, Hastings worked with FMR to develop and implement a restoration plan for the 30-acre tank farm and two-acre lakeshore areas of the Hastings River Flats Park. Located just north of Hasting's historic downtown, the 215-acre park is managed by the city, which shares ownership with majority landholder the Army Corps of Engineers. Restoration work began in 2003.

Returning these areas to their most likely historical mix requires thousands of hours of manpower... or rather, womanpower. FMR's Ecologist & Project Manager Karen Schik has headed up most of this process, from creating

to implementing the restoration management plan. Schik acts as a sort of general contractor, guiding and supervising subcontractors who remove stumps, administer controlled burns, selectively apply herbicide and perform other less-than-pleasant restoration tasks.

All restoration work is funded by the North American Wetland Conservation Act. However, several partners funded the planning process – the City of Hastings, National Park Service/MNRRRA, Department of Natural Resources and SKB Environmental waste management services.

Volunteers have contributed hundreds of hours to the effort as well, says Schik. She has been quite impressed with volunteers' dedication. Even when the wet prairie was especially sodden, retirees and teens alike (most from Joe Beattie's Hastings High School biology class) trudged in.

The result has been well worth the effort. Sans tank farm and mucky lakeshore, Hastings River Flats Park is an opportune place to see several types of habitat within a mid-length, three-mile hike.

The roughly triangle-shaped park is bounded by Lake Rebecca on the west, where FMR has performed significant lakeshore restoration work. The Mississippi borders the east side of the park, home to silver maple and cottonwood floodplain forests. From the dike that serves as the wide northern barrier of the park, an emergent marsh is visible. And on the shorter southern tip, which points to and is easily accessible from historic downtown Hastings, both dry and wet prairie restoration can be observed.

Hikers and revelers are likely to see wildlife enjoying the park as well, from muskrats and beaver to the year-round, resident pair of bald eagles and, on the bluff across the river from the park, a nesting pair of peregrine falcons.

*sue rich is a freelance writer and FMR's new volunteer coordinator (see profile at right).*

## **Board Spotlight**

### **Stewart Crosby**



A native of the Twin Cities, Stewart Crosby spent twelve years in Oregon before returning to Minneapolis with his wife and two children. Stewart joined the FMR board in 2002 and has been active on the Policy and Planning Committee and as Chair of the Mississippi River Challenge Steering Committee, which he has chaired for the past three years.

Stewart works as a landscape planner and designer for SRF Consulting Group, Inc. in Minneapolis. The focus of his work is multi-faceted and includes park, open space and trail planning and design, streetscape and urban design. Stewart believes that the Mississippi River acts as the backbone to our region's park system, as well as being the most important natural feature in the upper Midwest. "Most people are not aware of the importance of the Mississippi River to all of our communities, not just the cities that line the river. FMR is a great resource for people to get connected to the Mississippi and to learn how their lives – even if they live miles from the river – impact this vital resource."

## **New Staff**

### **Trevor Russell**



Trevor Russell was hired in April as FMR's Watershed Program Director. Trevor brings an impressive résumé of experience in environmental and land-use policy and advocacy. He is leading FMR's Watershed Protection Program, which is currently focused on proactively addressing water quality issues in two of the metro area's largest and most rapidly urbanizing watersheds – the Vermillion River and Rice Creek. Trevor can be contacted at 651-222-2193 x18 or [trussell@fmr.org](mailto:trussell@fmr.org).

### **sue rich**



A longtime friend of and activist for the environment, sue rich has great experience managing projects, people, intern programs, databases and communications. She is also a freelance writer, and looks forward to balancing an interactive, community-oriented job with her writing and journalism work. sue will be the primary contact for all of FMR's volunteer programs and projects, and can be reached at 651-222-2193 x14 or [srich@fmr.org](mailto:srich@fmr.org).

# Giving Back

**There are many ways to give – with a check or credit card, by making a gift of stock or securities or donating a car in good condition. You can use the envelope enclosed in this newsletter, give via the web site at [www.fmr.org](http://www.fmr.org) or call Heather at 651-222-2193 x20 to give with a credit card or get info on stock transfers and car donations.**

## Help make 2007 a year to remember for the river!

We have big plans for 2007 for programs and projects that will make the Mississippi River healthier, cleaner, more accessible and more inviting. But to implement these plans, we need YOUR help!

FMR's goal is to raise \$15,000 in contributions from our members and supporters by the end of 2006. That's 600 gifts of \$25, 375 gifts of \$40, 150 gifts of \$100, 60 gifts of \$250, 30 gifts of \$500, 15 gifts of \$1,000 – you get the idea, right? The key is for you to make a gift that is meaningful to you. If *you* give a gift you can afford, and everyone else does the same, then together *we* will reach our goal.

*Thank you in advance for helping us make 2007 a year to remember for the river!*

### Fight hibernation!

#### FALL VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Snowflakes may be falling (or on their way), but there are still many ways you can help FMR help the river.

**Office** Come take your coat off and stay awhile in FMR's comfortable new office. We need **in-office volunteers** to perform a variety of clerical tasks. Whether entering data or stuffing envelopes, volunteers maintain their own pace and work at their own level in a relaxed environment, full of camaraderie. Interested volunteers can join the Tuesday Night Crew – which meets from roughly 5:30-8 p.m. every Tuesday – or suggest an alternate time during the day that works better for their schedule.

**Seed collection** While most volunteer outdoor restoration opportunities are coming to an end, we still have a **need for seed**. If you have an affinity for, and some familiarity with, native grasses and forbs, we need your help gathering seed for restoration projects throughout the Vermillion Watershed (the Hastings/Farmington/Lakeville area).

**To assist with in-office work or seed collection, please contact Volunteer Coordinator sue rich, [srich@fmr.org](mailto:srich@fmr.org) or 651.222.2193 x14.**

## We've Moved!

After months of planning and making do in temporary quarters, FMR moved into its beautiful new offices in the Empire Building in downtown Saint Paul. Our phone numbers and email addresses remain the same, but our address has changed slightly (we moved across the hall, and have a new suite number):  
**360 North Robert Street, Suite 400, Saint Paul, MN 55101**

The next time you're in the area, feel free to stop by, say hello and check the new space!



FMR is proud to be a member of the Minnesota Environmental Fund ([www.mnenvirofund.org](http://www.mnenvirofund.org))



Friends  
of the  
Mississippi  
River

360 North Robert  
Street • Suite 400  
Saint Paul, MN 55101

Visit FMR's web site for the most current information on events and programs... **[www.fmr.org](http://www.fmr.org)**

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