

Gorge Stewards Quarterly

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Mississippi River Relief A Huge Success

A sincere thank you goes out to everyone who participated in the Mississippi River Relief – Big River Clean-up. On Thursday, June 27th approximately 82 volunteers gathered at the Minneapolis Rowing Club for the River Gorge clean-up. Many active River Gorge Stewards pitched in as well as new volunteers from the neighborhood and surrounding communities.

Groups of volunteers worked along the gorge shoreline covering areas from the Railroad Bridge at the northern end all the way to the 36th Street ravine. Numerous trash bags were filled under the Railroad Bridge and the sand beach immediately south. The groups working near the Rowing Club collected loads of trash from the shoreline and floodplain area, as well as from the Lake Street Bridge. A group of 20 energetic volunteers worked at the 36th Street ravine to remove a pair of old and useless steel sewer pipes. Lyndon Torstenson, Longfellow resident and member of the LCC River Gorge Committee, had

been talking with the head of Minneapolis Public Works about removing these pipes from the gorge. Public works agreed to have the 200-foot long pipes cut into moveable sections for the clean-up volunteers to carry away. At the event, volunteers were able to load the pipe pieces directly onto a jon boat anchored in the ravine. The defunct piping was estimated to weigh nearly one ton. Thanks to Lyndon and his crew of volunteers!

Throughout the week of June 22nd through June 30th there were several other successful clean-ups held as part of the Mississippi River Relief. The eight-day series yielded 92 tons of trash collected by 1,150 volunteers, along 43 river miles from Prescott, WI to St. Anthony Falls. That's an average of 135 pounds of trash per volunteer. Here is how it all broke down:

**3 boats, including 1 42-foot houseboat,
weighing 15 tons with silt**

1,634 car tires

4.9 tons of Styrofoam

20 55-gallon drums

24 propane tanks

5 refrigerators

5 bicycles

1 snowblower

1 vacuum cleaner

A total of 36% of the material collected, which included tires, scrap metal, and plastic, was recycled. The rest was made into pellets to be burned for electricity.

The role of the River Gorge Stewards allowed us to focus our efforts on the gorge and be the only group to hold a clean-up on the Minneapolis side of the river. And what an accomplishment it was! The river thanks you all!



Gorge Steward Lyndon Torstenson helps out with the summer clean-up near the Lake St. Bridge.



Fall Buckthorn Removals - August 24th and September 21st

In the gorge this fall buckthorn will meet its enemy – enthusiastic volunteers armed with loppers and gloves ready to help clear out the exotic species. Two extensive buckthorn removals are scheduled for late August and September at river sites near 44th Street and 46th Street. Friends of the Mississippi River is partnering with the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area for a buckthorn event to be held on Saturday, August 24th at the intersection near 46th Street and West River Parkway. Forestry crews from the Park Board will start early in the morning cutting the larger, more mature buckthorn. Volunteers are needed to help haul the cut buckthorn to wood chippers and hand pull smaller seedlings. This project is part of a comprehensive management plan to restore habitat lining the gorge.

Removing the thicket of buckthorn from the 46th Street woodland will be a key factor in eradicating the exotic species from the gorge.

The second buckthorn removal will take place on Saturday, September 21st at 44th Street and West River Parkway. Great River Greening will be the primary organizer for this 200 volunteer event. Friends of the Mississippi River and Longfellow Community Council will be recruiting local volunteers from the Gorge Stewards program, as well as several other neighborhood organizations. Similar to the August event, volunteers will be hauling cut buckthorn to woodchippers and hand pulling seedlings when needed.

On August 24th we are looking for volunteers to help out during two separate shifts, one from 9:00 a.m. – noon and a second from 12:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Volunteers are especially needed to

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help out for the afternoon shift. September 21st is a morning event from approximately 9:00 a.m. to noon, with lunch, door prizes and a brief program provided after the work is completed. If you are interested in volunteering for either of these events, please contact Katie Galloway, Friends of the Mississippi River, at 651/222-2193 x5. We hope to see you there!

Beth Upton, an active Gorge Steward, removes invasive species from the oak savanna restoration site at 36th St. last spring. This fall we have two buckthorn removal events in the southern part of the gorge. Please sign up to help out!

The Mississippi River Gorge Stewards is a neighborhood approach to protecting, restoring and interpreting a natural sanctuary in the heart of the Twin Cities. The project is co-sponsored by Friends of the Mississippi River, Longfellow Community Council and Seward Neighborhood Group. Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area and Great River Greening also provide support and assistance for the program.

Gorge Stewards Calendar

All activities are free and open to the public

Saturday, August 24th - Buckthorn Removal

West River Parkway & 46th St., 9:00 a.m. - noon & 12:30 - 3:00 p.m.

Saturday, September 21st - Buckthorn Removal

West River Parkway & 44th St., 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Saturday, September 28th - Prairie Weeding & Invasive Species Removal

West River Parkway & 25th St., 10:00 a.m. - noon

Saturday, October 19th - Seed Collection & Dispersal

West River Parkway & 36th St., 10:00 a.m. - noon

Sunday, November 10th - Geology and Natural History Hike

Seward Neighborhood (Location TBA), 10 a.m. - noon

Wednesday, December 4th - Trail Monitors Potluck and Holiday Party

Location TBA, 6-8:30 p.m.

For more information about the Gorge Stewards Project or to get involved, please contact Katie Galloway at Friends of the Mississippi River 651/222-2193 or kgallowa@fmr.org



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Friends of the Mississippi River is a leading citizen organization working to protect and enhance the Mississippi River and its watershed in the Twin Cities area.