

Gorge Stewards Quarterly

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Augsburg Students Steward the River

While removing buckthorn and other exotic species this fall or dispersing wildflower seeds through the 36th Street Oak Savanna, Gorge Stewards were working alongside several freshmen students from Augsburg College. These students were part of the “Engaging Communities and Campuses Program”, which is funded by a grant received by Augsburg to incorporate service learning into freshmen seminar classes.

This fall, Friends of the Mississippi River was fortunate to be partnered with two freshmen level Augsburg classes, World Politics and Effective Writing, both of which have a focus on water issues. A requirement built into the curriculum of this course was for students to work with FMR in the community, allowing them gain hands-on learning experiences while becoming civically engaged in their community – the essence of service learning.

Given the colleges close proximity to the Seward and Longfellow neighborhoods, many students chose to get involved in Gorge Stewards activities. Here are some of the student’s reflections on their service learning experience.

• “It never occurred to me how beautiful the area along the river was once you go into it. The day that we did the seed rebroadcast, I was blown away by how beautiful the Oak Savanna was. It was a wide-open area filled with numerous species of plants, hidden in the cover of large trees that surrounded the Savanna. I really enjoyed the whole experience with the Friends of the Mississippi River, because I feel that I have grown, internally as a person.”

• “I have grown up in the cities my whole life, and I must have



crossed the Mississippi at least a hundred times, but I don’t think I have ever stopped to look at it. This semester, as we walked along it, I took a long look at the river that we had been making an attempt to preserve; I was in awe. I began to understand the importance of the little things.”

• “If I can help by doing a few hours of work to protect such a vital part of our commercial and historical community, great! Volunteering also served as a good purpose for me personally. It made me feel like a real member of this community.”

FMR is excited to continue our work with students from Augsburg College in the fall of 2003. Involving students in Gorge Stewards activities has already proven to be beneficial to the program, while fostering a greater awareness of environmental and community issues among the student volunteers. We’re glad to be a part of this important partnership.

Gorge Stewards Expansion Update

Friends of the Mississippi River would like to officially welcome the Prospect Park neighborhood of Minneapolis and Merriam Park and Macalester-Groveland in St. Paul to the Gorge Stewards Project. The recent expansion of Gorge Stewards to these areas has really been taking shape. During these chilly winter months we have been networking and collaborating with the now five participating neighborhoods, as well as the St. Paul and Minneapolis Park agencies.

A calendar of events was prepared for all five neighborhoods based on recommendations from the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, St. Paul Parks and Recreation, and the ecological management plans prepared for areas along the gorge. Furthermore, active Gorge Stewards and neighborhood groups have provided ideas for projects and activities they’d like to see happen, some of which were incorporated into our latest schedule of events.

To assist in the planning of future Gorge Stewards programming, an inter-neighborhood river gorge committee will be formed, bringing together representatives from partners and neighborhood organizations involved in this project. The inter-neighborhood river gorge committee will be a collaborative approach to providing direction and ideas for the project, which supports the overall goal of Gorge Stewards to involve neighborhoods in local gorge protection efforts. If you’re interested in being a part of the committee or providing input on the program, please contact Irene Jones, Friends of the Mississippi River, at 651/222-2193 or ijones@fmr.org.

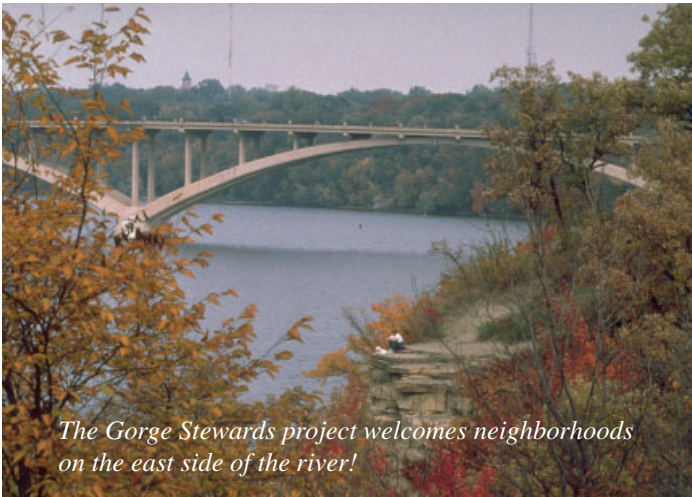


Augsburg students help remove weeds and woody invasive species at a planted prairie in the Seward neighborhood.

Intergenerational Project Introduced

The Gorge Stewards Project has added an intergenerational component, thanks to a one-year grant from Recreational Equipment Incorporated (REI). The grant will allow us to form a partnership between residents of the Becketwood Community and students from biology and environmental science classes at Minnehaha Academy.

The outcomes of the project are to educate the students involved about the ecological value of the Mississippi River Gorge, join Becketwood residents and students to complete two stewardship projects along the gorge this spring, and most importantly to establish a relationship between youth and seniors in the community. A steering committee consisting of members from the Becketwood Environment Committee and a biology teacher at Minnehaha Academy will provide guidance in carrying out the goals of this project and help to make this a successful pilot program that can be duplicated in other areas.



Gorge Stewards Calendar

All activities are free and open to the public.
This calendar is subject to change (and grow!)

March 6th - Safety Issues Meeting
Longfellow Park, 3435 36th Ave. S., 7-9 p.m.

March 13th - Birds of the Mississippi River Gorge

Space is limited. Pre-registration is required.
Holy Trinity Church, 2730 E. 31st St., 7-8:30 p.m.

April 12th - Spring Parks Clean-up
Mississippi River Boulevard, St. Paul
To sign up call St. Paul Parks at 651/266-6458.

April 19th - Watershed Clean-up
West River Parkway & 35th Street, 9-12
West River Parkway & 24th Street, 9-12

Saturday, April 26th - Trail and Invasive Species Monitoring Training
10 a.m. - noon, Location TBA

Saturday, May 24th - Bird Hike
Space is limited. Pre-registration is required.
West River Parkway & 36th Street

The Mississippi River Gorge Stewards is a neighborhood approach to protecting, restoring and interpreting a natural sanctuary in the heart of the Twin Cities sponsored by Friends of the Mississippi River. Funding is provided by the Longfellow Community Council, the Seward Neighborhood Group, and the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund.

*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.