Friends of the Mississippi River

2019 ANNUAL REPORT

Coming together for our river

Enjoy the full report:

fmr.org/AR2019
Dear friends of the river,

This uncertain season underscores how connected we all are. While the COVID-19 crisis requires that we keep our distance from one another, we also heed the call to recognize our interdependence, and to protect one another. You know how to do this. You know how to come together to save something beyond yourself. The stories we have to tell from 2019 celebrate this unity and generosity. Just as many waters unite to make our Mississippi mighty, it takes many communities joining together to protect our river.

Coming together for clean water and healthy habitat...

This year, FMR supported 20 organizations and our 2,000+ River Guardians to advocate for new laws to protect drinking water for every Minnesotan. We also formed the Forever Green Partnership with researchers, farmers, agribusinesses and others. This new coalition will support farmers by helping ‘clean-water crops’ take root, which will in turn protect our river from runoff pollution.

Through collaborations with government, landowners and volunteers, we restored 2,000+ acres of quality habitat this year. More than 20 at-risk species have made that habitat home.

Connecting communities through the river...

This was the first year of FMR’s Youth Empowerment Program giving metro teens who care about the environment a chance to build experience in the field. We also engaged hundreds of community members in local decision-making — at toxic Ford Area C, at the Upper Harbor Terminal and more.

We think there’s a reason our annual Earth Day cleanup overflowed with nearly 500 participants: The river inspires our belonging, and in turn our responsibility, to this place and to each other.

To all of you who gave time or resources this year to protect, restore and enhance the metro Mississippi, thank you. Like the river, we’re more powerful together.

Our sincerest gratitude,
Ronnei Brooks, Chair of FMR’s Board of Directors

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**TOGETHER IN 2019, WE...**

- **Made a buzz in our prairie restorations**
  - A 20-year partnership created habitat for the rusty patched bumblebee, which now lives in the metro Mississippi

- **Guarded the future of the past**
  - Persistent citizen advocacy influenced the cleanup of the toxic Ford Area C waste dump near Superior, Wisconsin

- **Created confluences with metro teens**
  - Youth Empowerment Program pilot took off

- **Called bluff on a Lilydale development**
  - Proactive advocacy prevented erosion that building too close to the bluff would cause

- **Grew a new alliance for clean-water crops**
  - The Forever Green Partnership took root

- **Raised a glass to safe drinking water for all**
  - A groundwater protected our groundwater and wells

- **Made art and erased invasives**
  - Volunteers got creative and stemmed out-of-hand invasive plants

- **Hold a beautiful day in the neighborhood**
  - The Gorge Earth Day cleanup overflowed with nearly 500 river friends

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**YOUR IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS**

**Education + engagement**
- 10,253 hours spent (by you) restoring and learning about the Mississippi
- 157 rain barrels built and placed to save rain from stormwater systems
- 2,482 youth engaged in field work, cleanups, lessons and more

**Habitat**
- 1,000+ pounds of prairie and woodland seeds spread to make diverse habitat
- 192 acres of Greatest Conservation Need found at our restoration sites

**Advocacy**
- 1,306 messages sent by River Guardians to decision-makers
- 28 projects and riverfront plans reviewed by FMR staff and advocates
- 450+ people urged legislators to protect water on Water Action Day

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**OUR 2019 STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES**

**Revenues:** $2,514,901

**Expenses:** $2,508,862

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*Calendar year 2019 unaudited amounts, unaudited.*

For our full financial report, check fmr.org/AR2019. Audited financials will be available after July 2020.

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[For more stories, visit fmr.org/AR2019]
THANK YOU
for coming together for our river

Through another year of profound impact on our hometown river, we are grateful for your unwavering generosity, backing and trust. Together, we got our hands dirty restoring critical habitat, spoke out as a voice for the river and made big-hearted gifts of support to help conserve our great natural treasure. Our collective commitment has never been stronger: to this work, our communities and the river.

Inside, view a snapshot of what you made possible in 2019. And be sure to enjoy the full, interactive version of our annual report as well as our list of generous 2019 donors at fmr.org/AR2019.

The river and all of us at FMR extend our gratitude for all that you made possible and helped achieve. You welcomed your role as a Mississippi River steward and are part of a community of river protectors. Thank you for helping carry out our shared vision of clean waters, restored habitat and a river for all to enjoy.

—Whitney Clark, Executive Director