

**Subject:** Mississippi Messages — December 2021  
**From:** Friends of the Mississippi River <communications@fmr.org>  
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**MISSISSIPPI  
MESSAGES**

[Our work takes place on the ancestral homelands of the Dakota.](#) Haha Wakpa, Misi-ziibi, Mississippi — the river we steward in Minnesota has long been stewarded by Native Nations including the Dakota and the Ojibwe.

## FMR Updates



### River Guardians' impact in 2021

River Guardians took action in 2021 to champion a federal funding program to restore the Mississippi, advocate for access and parkland in the metro and protect Minneapolis' drinking water.

[Watch the thank-you video we recorded \(complete with outtakes at the end\) to celebrate our advocates' impact >>](#)



### What the federal infrastructure bill means for water

Congress passed a long-awaited Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which President Biden signed into law on November 15.

[Here's what it means for Minnesota's waters >>](#)



## FMR is hiring an ecologist

If you're passionate about environmental protection and ecosystem restoration, join our team as an ecologist! And stay tuned — we've got another exciting change to announce about our land conservation team in January.

[Apply by January 14, 2022 >>](#)



## Mississippi Dunes: Cottage Grove's great missed opportunity

The Cottage Grove City Council recently approved a plan for the former Mississippi Dunes golf course. While the plan includes a modest riverfront park, many residents hoped for more.

[Here's our analysis >>](#)



## A heartfelt thanks to our 1,572 volunteers

You offered nearly 5,000 hours of service to the river this year. [See our video highlights](#) of your work on habitat restoration projects throughout the metro area. A [special thanks to the 500 youth](#) that stenciled storm drains with water quality messages, conducted scientific surveys of pollinators and worms at our project sites, and helped restore land through invasive species removal.



## A booklist on place from FMR staff and board

If you find yourself looking for book recommendations this winter as the pandemic continues, here are just a few of our staff and board members' favorites on the river, our relationship to place and where we live.

[Check out our recommendations and tell us yours >>](#)



## Where we work: River Oaks Park

A tiny 2-acre remnant bedrock bluff prairie in Cottage Grove holds mighty habitat diversity and offers stunning 180-degree views of the Mississippi River and its surroundings.

[Learn more about our restoration there and plan a visit >>](#)

## Mississippi River News

### **Dam removal brings "river giants" back to Minnesota waterways**

A Star Tribune article featuring state experts and their work celebrated the return of paddlefish and other river species as a result of dam removal projects across the state. As dams are removed, rivers rebound and an average of 73% of species return to their former range. What could this mean for the future of Twin Cities locks and dams? And how would dam removal affect management of species like invasive carp?

[Read more from FMR >>](#)

### **Minnesota updates list of impaired waters for 2022**

As required by the federal Clean Water Act, Minnesota creates a list of impaired waters — those that fail to meet water quality standards — every two years. For the draft 2022 list, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency is adding 305 water bodies with 417 new impairments including PFAS, or "forever chemicals," and sulfates that threaten wild rice production. While there are no new impairments for the Mississippi River, major tributaries will have new additions.

[Read more from FMR >>](#)

### **'Flooding and Nuclear Waste Eat Away at a Tribe's Ancestral Home'**

It's not news that the Prairie Island Indian Community shares its land with nuclear waste storage from the nearby Xcel Energy nuclear power plant, or that the Mississippi River — whose levels are controlled by the Army Corps of Engineers' Lock and Dam #3 just downstream — floods the reservation periodically. But now Congress has a chance to redress these actions by officially establishing nearby acreage, purchased by Prairie Island Indian Community, as part of this tribe's trust.

[Read more from the New York Times >>](#)

### **'Mpls Upper Harbor plan ignores climate change'**

In a recent editorial, the North Minneapolis-based Community Member for Environmental Justice outline why [they've sued the City of Minneapolis](#) over the city council-approved Upper Harbor Terminal redevelopment plan for the North Minneapolis riverfront. Namely, the planned redevelopment and its environmental review don't take into account the harms to the environment or current residents that climate change and this development will exacerbate. They call for Minneapolis to pause all work on this plan.

[Read more from the Spokesman-Recorder >>](#)

## Guest blog posts from ESI fellows



Our summer Environmental Stewardship Institute (ESI) fosters the diverse next generation of environmental leaders. Over the next few months, we'll feature some of our 2021 fellows' guest blog posts about their final projects.

Lydia set up organics recycling at her church and put her design skills to work creating [an infographic to explain the benefits of composting and how to do it](#) (previewed here on the left).

Brenda [drew a cautionary tale to show the impact stray balloons can have on wildlife](#) (previewed here on the right).

## Conservation Corner



### Climate change, climate justice and FMR's Land Conservation program

In the face of climate change, we're planting climate-adapted tree species and connecting and restoring corridors for wildlife and their migrations. Plus, land protection and restoration for ecological diversity keep urban areas cooler and more resilient.

[Learn more about how our Land Conservation program fights climate change and its impacts >>](#)

## Supporting FMR



## Join our community of river supporters

As the season of giving is upon us, please consider a year-end gift to ensure the life-sustaining force of the river is protected for all. Donate, join or renew by December 31 to help keep our work going strong in 2022.

[Donate today >>](#)

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### Friends of the Mississippi River

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