

Subject: Mississippi Messages — March 2021
From: Friends of the Mississippi River <communications@fmr.org>
To: sue rich <communications@fmr.org>
Date Sent: Wednesday, October 25, 2023 6:16:04 PM GMT-05:00
Date Received: Wednesday, October 25, 2023 6:16:06 PM GMT-05:00



**MISSISSIPPI
MESSAGES**

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FMR Updates



Youth education programs available

Looking for ways to get outdoors or engage in a fun educational activity for the river? FMR offers a variety of free virtual and in-person education and volunteer opportunities for K-12 classes, groups and individual youth in the Twin Cities metro area.

[Check out our menu of opportunities for youth >>](#)



Introducing the Forever Green Partnership

We're proud to announce the launch of one of our biggest initiatives yet. This coalition, formed last year and ramping up now, aims to solve the problem of agricultural pollution by advancing economically viable clean-water crops.

[Find out how we're bringing these crops to fruition >>](#)



Legislation to support Forever Green clean-water crops advances

The Forever Green Initiative is at an inflection point, making funding for progress on clean-water crops crucial this cycle. So far, legislation has made it through key agricultural committees with bipartisan support.

[What's next for our top legislative priority? >>](#)



How to enjoy dog parks while keeping water and wildlife safe

Can a person's best friend be a friend of the river? Meet our dogs, find out about their favorite spots and learn tips for keeping the river safe.

[Ways to be mindful of the river while out with your four-legged friends >>](#)



Summer field ecology internship opening

Come work with our conservation team! Our field ecology internship (late-May through mid-August, with stipend) is an excellent opportunity for an undergraduate or graduate student with an ecology, wildlife or natural resources-related major.

[Apply now or spread the word >>](#)



Minnesota's new budget forecast redefines legislative session

Last November's projected state budget deficit turned into a projected \$1.23 billion surplus in February. That has major implications for clean water, soil health and other environmental issues this legislative session.

[What will the surplus and stimulus mean for our priorities? >>](#)



Calling all river advocates!

In addition to legislative action this spring, River Guardians are weighing in to shape park plans and [safeguard the Twin Cities water supply](#). Plus, they're poised to [support a forthcoming federal initiative to protect the river](#), from headwaters to gulf.

[Sign up as a River Guardian now to receive key action alerts this spring.](#)
[>>](#)

Mississippi River News

Star Tribune highlights opposition to Corps' lock disposition plan

Despite significant public opposition, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is continuing with its plan to transfer ownership of the Upper St. Anthony Falls lock. As reported by Susan Du in the Star Tribune, it's uncertain whether any potential new owner exists. Regardless, if a new owner neglected to maintain the lock, the structure could fail. Water levels upstream of the lock would drop, limiting or even eliminating the ability of two key drinking water supply intakes to draw in enough water. FMR board member and river historian John Anfinson has written a fascinating report about the history of St. Anthony Falls and the threat that the Corps' plan poses to our water supply.

[Read more from FMR >>](#)

'Ramsey County says yes to man-made islands in Pigs Eye Lake'

Last month, the Ramsey County Board approved a plan to create islands in St. Paul's Pigs Eye Lake with dredged sediments from the Mississippi River. We're optimistic about the project and its benefits. New islands would break up winds and offer a foothold for plants and animals, transforming this "aquatic desert" to quality habitat for fish, birds, river otters and more. Construction should start in July.

[Read more from the Star Tribune >>](#)

'Spring Lake Park Reserve undergoing transformation'

Extending along the Mississippi in Dakota County for several miles, Spring Lake regional park offers stunning views of the river, miles of trails and expansive areas of natural open space, including steep forested bluffs down to the river and a native prairie restored by FMR with help from our volunteers. The county is updating the park's master plan, which includes the possibility of bringing back bison to an enclosed portion of their prairie restoration. [Read our comments](#) on the current plan and [weigh in yourself by April 4](#).

[Read more from The Sun >>](#)

'Watershed District receives climate award'

The South Washington Watershed District, with whom we partner to restore habitat at parks in the area like [Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park](#) mentioned above, received the Minnesota Climate Adaptation Partnership's 2021 Organization Award. The award recognizes ecological restoration work, which improves water quality and helps prevent floods, as an important part of climate solutions around resilience and adaptation.

[Read more from the Stillwater Gazette >>](#)

Upcoming Events



Earth Day is just around the corner! We'll have a [limited-capacity River Gorge cleanup on Saturday, April 24](#). Please register in advance.

Not everyone will be able to join us at the gorge, but [if you pick up trash on your own any time this April, be sure to let us know](#) so we can celebrate your impact and credit you with volunteer hours.

We're adding more spring stewardship volunteer events this month, so be sure to check [our full events calendar](#) for new opportunities.

Conservation Corner

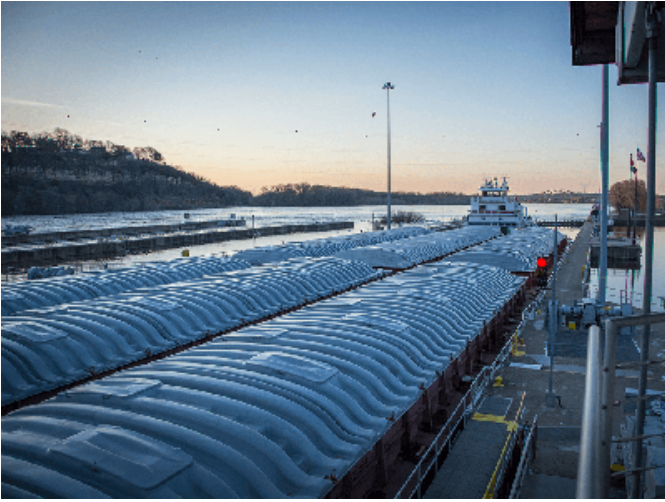


Where we work: Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park

A forested valley with 100-foot high slopes runs into Ravine Lake at this 515-acre Washington County park. We've been managing oak savanna and prairie habitat restoration here since 2012.

[Find out more about this park and plan a visit >>](#)

Write to the River



Call for spring submissions

As the Mississippi River awakens, birds return, trees bud, new life begins, tows and barges once again make their way through our waters.

What says spring is here to you? We invite you to write to the river and be a part of our spring edition.

[Send us your spring poems and prose by May 1 >>](#)

Supporting FMR



A transformative opportunity

This coming spring holds so much promise for our river. We're proud to be a part of the team supporting [soon-to-be-introduced federal legislation to protect the Mississippi from the headwaters to the gulf](#). Whitney Clark, our executive director says, "The Mississippi River Restoration & Resilience Initiative would be a game-changer for the river, and may be one of the most transformative and impactful initiatives FMR has ever worked on." Your support ensures initiatives like this flourish.

[Join us and give today >>](#)

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