

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

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FMR Updates



The clock runs out on the Minnesota Legislature

On the final day of the 2021 legislative session, lawmakers agreed to a \$52 billion two-year state budget, but the clock ran out before they could pass any meaningful legislation.

[Here's where major water-related environmental bills stand as we prepare for a special session >>](#)



Welcome back, John!

We're thrilled to welcome John Briel back to the FMR team. John had previously worked for FMR as our development associate before moving to Chicago in 2017. Now he's back as our new member relations manager and has hit the ground running, serving FMR's incredible community of members and donors.

[Meet John Briel >>](#)



Landscape for the river this spring

Planting for pollinators? Interested in rain barrels? We've got you covered! Check out our newly updated resource pages on how to make your home and garden river-friendly.

[Learn more >>](#)



Environmental Stewardship Institute alum keeps Hidden Falls Park clean

A summer project turned into a year-round commitment for 2020 ESI Fellow Jonathan Wilson-Thieroff. As we prepare for the third summer of ESI, we're thrilled to catch up with Jonathan about his ongoing commitment to this project and about his future plans.

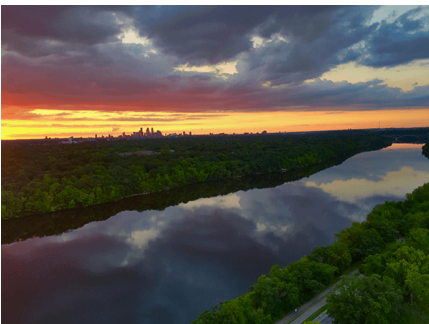
[Read about Jonathan's impact on fishing line waste >>](#)



Ramsey County considers three properties for redevelopment, conservation

What will happen to the site of a former juvenile correctional facility on undeveloped bluffland holding Dakota history, a golf course that's home to an endangered bumblebee, and a grassland where prairie birds flock?

[Learn more about the plans for these Maplewood and St. Paul sites >>](#)



Where we work: The Mississippi River Gorge

Forested limestone bluffs make up the only gorge on the entire length of the Mississippi River as it flows through the heart of the Twin Cities, flanked by beloved recreational parkways. Dedicated volunteers at our restoration projects improve habitat in this urban oasis.

[Visit the gorge >>](#)

Mississippi River News

Tributes to Walter Mondale and Deb Swackhamer

In April, we lost two great champions for the protection of the environment, for rivers, lakes and public health.

FMR Executive Director Whitney Clark writes, "In my career, I've had the opportunity to work with a number of prominent politicians, scientists and advocates. Walter Mondale and Deb Swackhamer were two of the finest I've known."

[Read more from FMR >>](#)

Kernza pays off for MN water supplies

The flagship clean-water crop delivers tremendous value in reducing water pollution, reports the Star Tribune: "The soil and water near some of the most polluted wells in Minnesota is almost entirely clean three years after a new type of wheat[grass] was planted on the surface. The perennial wheat[grass], called Kernza, was grown just west of Brainerd on a few acres immediately surrounding wells within corn and soybean fields. Over the past three years, it cut nitrate contamination from the cornfields by 96% and from soybeans by 86%."

[Read more from FMR >>](#)

Invasive carp continue to pose threat

Invasive carp have been steadily working their way up the Mississippi River since the 1970s, causing immeasurable harm to river ecosystems and communities along the way. While multiple species of invasive carp are known to be present in Minnesota, we don't know the full extent of the population or whether carp are reproducing in our waterways. In early April, Minnesota, Wisconsin and federal agencies harvested about 30 invasive carp in Pool 8 of the Mississippi River near La Crosse, WI, a reminder that these fish pose an ongoing threat to Minnesota's waterways.

[Read more from FMR >>](#)

Federal funding for clean water?

Did you know the American Rescue Plan specifies that relief funds can be used for water infrastructure? FMR and our allies recently asked Governor Walz to use a portion of Minnesota's ~\$2.6 billion in state relief to [improve drinking water and water quality statewide through lead service line replacement and other measures](#).

We're also proud to be part of a broad coalition of 133 conservation, farmer and rancher, wildlife, and other groups urging the leadership of the U.S. House and U.S. Senate agriculture committees to ensure the forthcoming infrastructure package includes [robust funding for Farm Bill conservation programs and farmer assistance](#).

Upcoming Events



You're invited to our [River Guardians + Members Legislative Session Wrap-up Happy Hour on Tuesday, May 25](#). RSVP for the link.

Join us [Thursday, June 10 at Camel's Hump Park and Open Space](#) in Cottage Grove to plant pollinator patches, and [Tuesday, June 22 at Indian Mounds Park](#) to tend the prairie bluff.

[See our full events calendar for more volunteer opportunities >>](#)

Conservation Corner

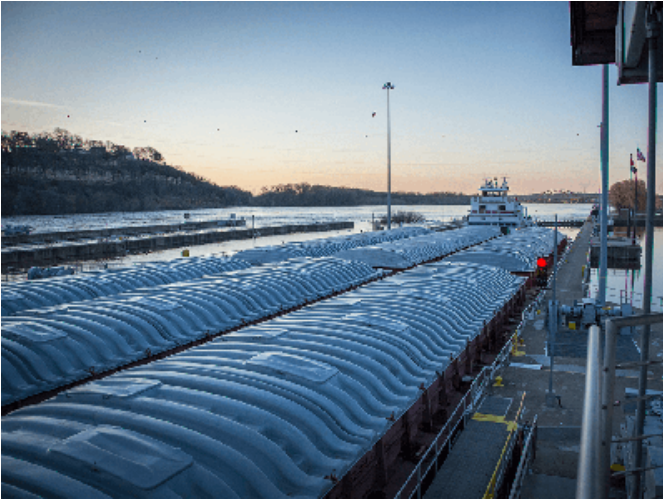


Our favorite take-aways from this spring's Pollinator Summit

At a recent summit our ecologists picked up a few new ideas about how to restore land with bees, butterflies and other pollinators in mind, and learned more about how pollinators restore the land themselves.

[Read on for our take-aways on soil scouting, goat grazing, our tiniest SuperVolunteers, and the 5,000 invertebrates under your feet at every step >>](#)

Write to the River



Excerpts from the spring edition

Part of growing into a Dakota winyan,
Is to have a čante ohitika,
A strong heart.
It means caring for my sick relative,
Loving her all the same,
Bravely sitting by her side, fighting to support her life,
The way she has always supported ours.
Mni wičoni.
—Kachina Yeager

Silt settles fertile earth.
I sink into ancient songs,
barefoot on muddy banks.
—Ellen Lager

I didn't yet understand that the Saint Croix was soon
to reach its mighty destination and become part of
the Mississippi.
—Cynthia Davidson Bend

Engrossed by the reality we'd never see the same
wrinkle of water again, we'd stare at the departing
barges.
—Kevin Finley

[Enjoy the full spring Write to the River >>](#)

Supporting FMR



In case you missed it — FMR's 2020 annual report

Thank you again for everything you helped us achieve in 2020. Our impactful work was made possible by the enduring generosity of our community of river stewards. If you haven't already done so, we hope you'll take a minute to scroll through our interactive annual report to see what we accomplished together.

[Enjoy our online annual report >>](#)

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