

**Subject:** Mississippi Messages — September 2022  
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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 and continues to be stewarded by Dakota and Ojibwe people.

## FMR Updates



### FMR website gets a refresh

We're excited to unveil our newly refreshed website! With a sleeker design, improved navigation and greater accessibility, we hope the thousands of visitors to fmr.org each month will have an even better experience finding the information they need in order to protect and restore the river we all love. (Thanks for your patience as we iron out the last wrinkles.)

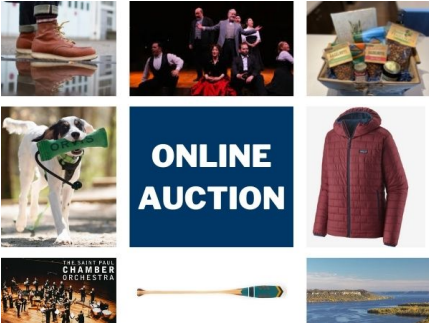
[Here's our new look >>](#)



### What you need to know about the Army Corps' studies of Twin Cities locks and dams

What will happen to metro locks and dams? Here's a rundown of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers disposition study process and timeline, the scenarios under consideration, plus ways you can shape the river's future.

[Learn more about the first steps toward investigating potential dam removal >>](#)



## Play to win in our online silent auction

Our river-themed silent auction is back, and anyone can participate. You can bid on exciting experiences, local goods and one-of-a-kind items all from the convenience of your phone, tablet or computer. Win something for yourself, your friends or your pup!

[Register and check it out today, then bid from Mon., Sept. 26 through Thurs., Sept. 29, at 7 p.m. >>](#)



## Congrats to our 2022 ESI summer intensive fellows!

We doubled the size of our summer intensive program for high school-aged youth this year. Find out what our fellows explored and learned, read two reflections on the program and see their final projects.

[Check out our fellows' videos, infographics, research and more >>](#)



## A new River Learning Center design

Earlier this summer, FMR raised significant concerns about St. Paul's plans for the River Learning Center. The recently revised design is better, but we still have some questions.

[Read more](#) and [sign up as a River Guardian](#) to weigh in when the time is right.



## Fall yard cleanup: 5 ways to help protect the river

Fall yard cleanup is an important annual chore, but not just for the tidiness of your lawn or vibrancy of your garden. It's an opportunity for everyday homeowners and property managers to help protect water quality by making a few simple, river-friendly choices.

[5 ways you can protect water quality with your fall yard care >>](#)



## FMR among 150+ groups pushing for 'transformative' Farm Bill

The wide-ranging Farm bill expires every five years. U.S. lawmakers are slated to reauthorize this industry-shaping legislation in 2023. We want to see a Farm Bill that will strengthen the U.S. food system while also making it more equitable.

[Read the letter sent to President Biden and the USDA >>](#)

## Mississippi River News

### Invasive species continue their march up the Mississippi River

More than two dozen harmful invasive species are inching closer to the Mississippi River basin. In addition to [invasive silver carp](#), there are 25 aquatic species (thought to have hitched a ride on international freighters that travel the Great Lakes) that could imperil the river basin's delicate ecosystem. One issue identified in the story? There's no larger program coordinating prevention efforts. That's precisely why FMR is a staunch supporter of the [Mississippi River Restoration & Resilience Initiative](#), a proposal that would establish a federal river program modeled after one that exists for the Great Lakes.

[Read more from MPR News >>](#)

### More water in Mississippi River leading to loss of floodplain forests

Continually high water levels in the upper Mississippi River threaten some of Minnesota's most ecologically rich habitat: floodplain forest. A report released this summer found high water flows in the river are happening more often and lasting for longer periods of time. The stress caused by the resulting floods is killing trees and wearing down a valuable ecosystem, one that serves as "critical habitat" for wildlife and helps reduce downstream pollution. Some of FMR's conservation work takes place in floodplain forests, including at [William H. Houlton Conservation Area](#) and [along the Vermillion River](#).

[Read more from MPR News >>](#)

### The state of Kernza in Minnesota

Kernza is one of [the clean-water crops we're particularly excited about](#). It's a perennial grain with a deep root system that helps build soil health and keeps nitrates out of our waters. (It's also pretty great as a [baking ingredient!](#)) But where exactly are we on this journey with Kernza? Reporter Kaomi Lee sought to answer that question on a recent episode of TPT's "Almanac." She traveled to a high school in Alexandria, an organic farm in Madison and research plots at the U of M to learn about the [environmental and economic potential of Kernza](#) — and the hurdles it still faces.

[Watch at TPT >>](#)

### 'Global attachés visit U of M as part of state ag sector tour'

Agricultural representatives of more than two dozen countries visited the University of Minnesota this month to learn about clean-water crops. The attachés (who are stationed at foreign embassies in D.C. and liaise with the U.S. on agricultural issues) went to the St. Paul campus Sept. 19 as part of a state agricultural tour. The topic? The Forever Green Initiative and [the work being done to advance](#) new continuous living cover crops. These crops [can improve soil health and protect the water](#) — which is why [FMR is such a big fan of them](#).

[Read more from CFANS >>](#)

## Conservation Corner



### New video: How we protect land — The story of Pine Bend Bluffs Natural Area

Experience the stunning landscape of the Pine Bend Bluffs Natural Area habitat corridor with a bird's-eye view. FMR Senior Ecologist Karen Schik shares her perspectives on one of the largest and most diverse ecosystems in the Twin Cities area, which is also FMR's first land protection project and our longest-running restoration site. (And scroll down to join us for a volunteer opportunity there!)

[Watch the video >>](#)

## Upcoming Events



What better way to celebrate fall than to join us for our last volunteer stewardship event this year — a [brush haul at Pine Bend Bluffs Natural Area on Oct. 29](#)? Register today!

We're proud sponsors of an online discussion with [Bill McKibben on Friday, Sept. 30](#). Learn more and register.

The Army Corps announced it will host a series of [open houses and public forums on the future of Twin Cities locks and dams Oct. 11, 14, 15 and 25](#). Sign up as a [River Guardian](#) and we'll send you more info soon.

[Check out our full events calendar >>](#)

## Supporting FMR



### Become a member today and help us conserve the river

You can join our growing membership with a gift of \$25, \$50 or \$100. Members receive our semiannual print newsletter, invitations to special events and the satisfaction of knowing their support is going to impact clean water, restored lands and a river for all to enjoy.

[Join by Sept. 30 to guarantee receipt of our upcoming print newsletter!](#)

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#### Friends of the Mississippi River

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