



Friends of the Mississippi River

OUR RIVER



C A M P A I G N



Friends of the Mississippi River

Imagine with us a river where the water is clear and clean and safe to swim in, where fish and wildlife are healthy and abundant, and where scenic bluffs and cultural treasures are protected.

OUR MISSION

is to engage people to protect, restore and enhance the Mississippi River and its watershed in the Twin Cities region.

HIGHLIGHTS OF FMR'S IMPACTS

For over 30 years, FMR has been a strong, balanced and effective conservation leader in the Twin Cities region.

State rules that govern land use within the National Park **respect the river's unique natural and cultural resources.**

The permanent protection and restoration of our region's most precious blufftop prairies, floodplain forests, and riverfront parks, including the majestic Pine Bend Bluffs, the Vermillion Bottoms and the iconic Mississippi River Gorge.

The passage of Minnesota legislation banning triclosan in consumer products, **improving Mississippi River – and statewide – water quality** and catalyzing a national triclosan ban.

50,000+ Minnesotans actively engaged in river stewardship and meaningfully contributing to its long-term protection.





Friends of the Mississippi River

OUR RIVER CAMPAIGN

CAMPAIGN VISION

Our vision is a transformed and thriving Mississippi River with clean and healthy waters, a vibrant watershed resilient to climate change, and diverse, engaged communities caring for its future.





OUR RIVER CAMPAIGN THESE ARE DAKOTA HOMELANDS

In the Twin Cities, we live and work on the ancestral homelands of the Dakota people and our offices are near Bdote, a sacred site of Dakota creation stories that is located where the Mississippi River (Haha Wakpa) and the Minnesota River (Mnisota Wakpa) meet. We honor the Indigenous history and presence here, and strive to uplift Indigenous voices and knowledge in our work.

For years, FMR has been restoring Indian Mounds Regional Park, a sacred burial site for the Indigenous community. Photo: Lorie Schaul

OUR RIVER CAMPAIGN GLOBAL IMPORTANCE

Protecting the
River Corridor

FMR focuses
on four
principal areas

Land
Conservation

Water
Protection

Stewardship
and Education

We recently adopted an ambitious strategic plan that builds on the organization's strong reputation and track record of success.

**The health of the river
and the communities that
depend on it are at stake.**

The majestic bluffs of Lilydale Regional Park as the river enters downtown St. Paul

OUR RIVER CAMPAIGN
GLOBAL IMPORTANCE

A vital migratory corridor for
60% of all North American birds and
40% of waterfowl

Home to diverse freshwater life

260

Species of Fish

50

Mammal Species

145

Amphibians

38

Freshwater Mussels



OUR RIVER CAMPAIGN
GLOBAL IMPORTANCE

4th largest watershed in the world
draining 1.2 million square miles



20 million people in 50 cities
rely on the river for drinking water



The watershed is home to
90% of all US agricultural exports

A man wearing a red life vest and a tan cap is paddling a bright green kayak on a river. The water is calm and reflects the surrounding greenery. The background is a dense forest of tall trees.

OUR RIVER CAMPAIGN GLOBAL IMPORTANCE

Drives a vibrant natural resource and
recreation-based economy

≈ **\$500 billion**
annual revenue generated

+ **1.5 million**
people directly employed

OUR RIVER CAMPAIGN
CLIMATE IMPACT

“Most climate change impacts
come down to water.”

—Umpanu Lall, Director of the Columbia Water Center
Columbia University

Climate change leads to intense rain events and
flooding that wash what’s on our land into the river.

+24%
*Nitrate
Pollution*

**Scientists expect nitrate
pollution in the Upper
Mississippi to increase by 24%
in the 21st Century**

OUR RIVER CAMPAIGN OUR WORK

Our vision is a transformed and thriving Mississippi River with clean and healthy waters, a vibrant watershed resilient to climate change, and diverse, engaged communities caring for its future. The impact of this vision is to ensure vibrant health for fish and wildlife, farmers, businesses, residents and communities.

THE OUR RIVER CAMPAIGN WILL FUND WORK TO:

Restore the river:

- Invest in new agricultural strategies
- Advocate for new public funding
- Protect vital lands

Engage communities:

- Advocate for the river
- Grow programs for youth and communities
- Provide volunteer stewardship opportunities

OUR RIVER CAMPAIGN
OUR WORK | RESTORE THE MISSISSIPPI

The next ten years is a critical period for the river and for surrounding communities.

FMR is at the forefront of groundbreaking initiatives to strategically mitigate river threats, including catalyzing a first-of-its-kind collaboration to address the most intractable pollutant to our waters — runoff from agricultural lands.

Confluence of Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers known as Bdote Minisota



OUR RIVER CAMPAIGN
OUR WORK | RESTORE THE MISSISSIPPI

TRANSFORM

We are building a cross-sector partnership to develop “clean-water crops” that can dramatically reduce runoff, enhance wildlife habitat, and improve profitability for farmers. This initiative has the potential to benefit communities from Minnesota to the Gulf of Mexico.

This campaign will support FMR’s work to advance regenerative agricultural systems at scale across the watershed.



Kernza is a perennial grain that builds healthy soil, improves wildlife habitat, and enhances water quality.



OUR RIVER CAMPAIGN
OUR WORK | RESTORE THE MISSISSIPPI

PUBLIC FUNDING

would allocate significant resources

through the

**Mississippi River Restoration and
Resilience Initiative (MRRRI)**

FMR is the co-chair of MRRRI, a **10-state initiative** to pass major new federal funding **that will support restoration and resilience projects** designed to address devastating flooding, habitat loss, water quality degradation and other deleterious climate change impacts.

This multi-state initiative was formed when Congressional leaders asked FMR to develop a basin-wide approach to river protection and restoration.

This may be a once-in-a-generation opportunity to positively transform the Mississippi River.

OUR RIVER CAMPAIGN
OUR WORK | RESTORE THE MISSISSIPPI

CONSERVE LAND

Short-sighted development and a historic lack of community investment in natural places are threatening habitat throughout the region. With support, we can respond nimbly to land protection opportunities throughout the Twin Cities corridor, create open spaces for all and restore vital habitat for threatened and endangered species like the red-headed woodpecker, rusty patched bumble bee and Blanchard's cricket frog.

This campaign will allow FMR to restore and protect critical ecological land along the river and its tributaries in the Twin Cities.

Female bobolink in threatened grasslands (Photo: John Zakelj)



OUR RIVER CAMPAIGN

OUR WORK | ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY

ADVOCATE

Informed and engaged residents are foundational for sustaining a healthy community.

This campaign will allow FMR to train and support its corps of river advocates, already 2,000 strong.

Local volunteer activists — known as River Guardians — represent diverse communities throughout the river corridor and provide the grassroots power needed to influence public policy decisions that affect the river at the local, state and federal levels.



OUR RIVER CAMPAIGN
OUR WORK | ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY



YOUTH PROGRAMMING

This campaign will allow FMR to engage youth from diverse communities in programming to nurture an understanding and ethic for protecting the health of the river.

FMR Youth Programs

Outdoor and service learning to connect youth to the land and water in their communities

The Environmental Stewardship Institute, an immersive program for diverse high school students to explore river issues and career pathways

Partnerships with schools, nonprofits, and the National Park Service to facilitate a role for youth in planning and programming

The Youth Council expands youth leadership opportunities

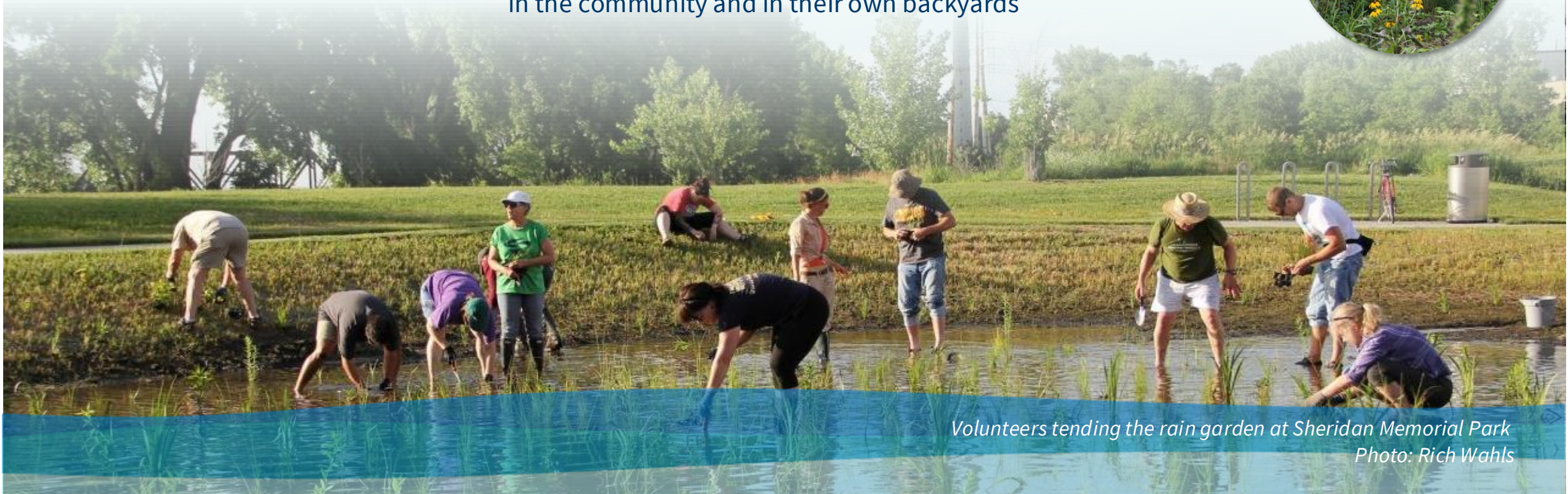
Harding High School Earth Club at Willowbrook

OUR RIVER CAMPAIGN
OUR WORK | ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY

This campaign will increase avenues for people to care for the river.

STEWARDSHIP

Deepen community connections and enhance inclusive and culturally-responsive programming for people to protect and steward the river, in the community and in their own backyards



*Volunteers tending the rain garden at Sheridan Memorial Park
Photo: Rich Wahls*

OUR RIVER CAMPAIGN

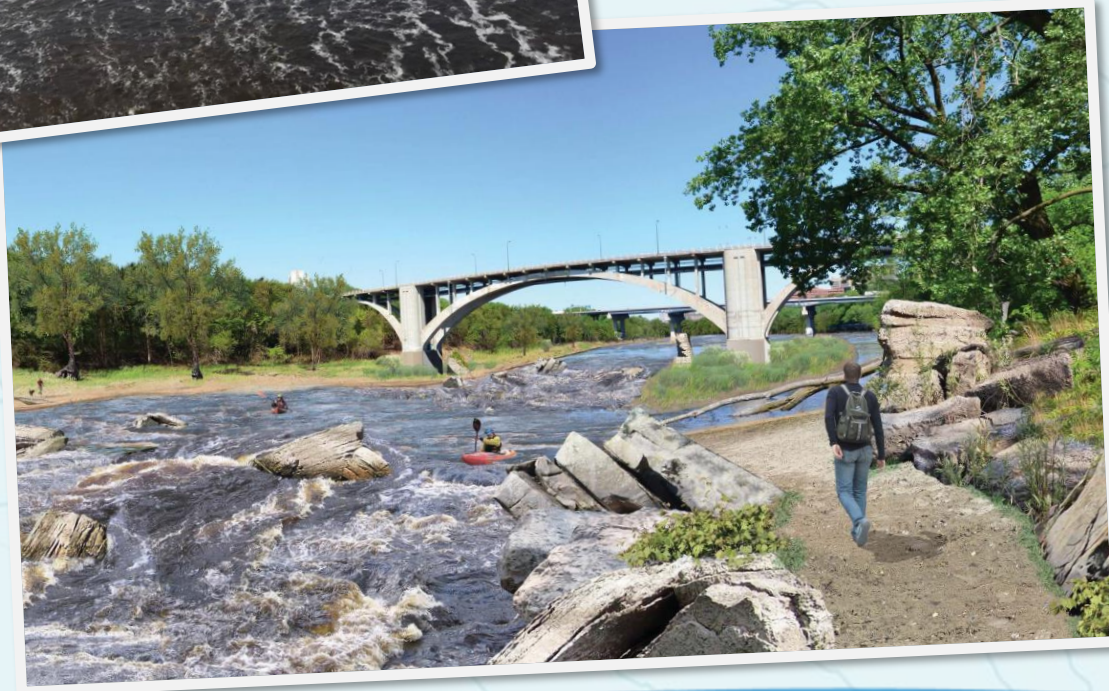
OUR WORK | ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY



Ford Dam Site

Left: Before removal

Below: Possible after removal



ENGAGE

FMR is engaging cultural and community groups to participate in public decision-making regarding the future of our shared river, like the Army Corps of Engineers' forthcoming study about potential dam removal in the heart of Minneapolis-St. Paul.

With campaign support, FMR will center diverse community voices and advocate for equitable community processes, ensuring everyone who has a stake in the river's health is heard.

Below: John Koepke, Samuel Geer and Michale Keenan, Faculty of the Department of Landscape Architecture, University of Minnesota and Principals, @Urban Ecosystems LLC

**OUR RIVER CAMPAIGN
SECURING THE FUTURE**

\$5 MILLION GOAL

\$1,100,000

\$500K

\$1,200,000

\$1,900,000

**\$300
K**

**River Restoration
& Resilience**

**Land
Conservation**

**Youth and Community
Engagement**

**Agricultural Landscape
Change & Water Quality**

**Organizational
Capacity
Building**



OUR RIVER CAMPAIGN LEADERSHIP



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An aerial photograph of a city skyline at sunset. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and blue. In the foreground, there is a large green park area with a river flowing through it. A bridge is visible in the middle ground, and the city skyline is in the background. The text is overlaid on a semi-transparent blue and green background.

OUR RIVER CAMPAIGN

JOIN US

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