



Our River. Our Community.

FRIENDS OF THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER
FMR.ORG

2015 ANNUAL REPORT



A NOTE FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR



DEAR FRIENDS,

During a recent hike in Patagonia South America, my guide, who spoke little English, asked, “Where are you from in the USA?” “Minnesota” I replied. He shook his head indicating unfamiliarity. A few minutes later he suddenly inquired, “Mississippi River?” “Yes,” I said, “the Mississippi River begins in Minnesota.”

This was a powerful reminder that our local Mississippi is one of the world’s great rivers. Back here at home, it’s exciting to see this recognition increasingly take hold. More and more, communities that once turned their back to the river now turn their gaze towards the river’s majestic beauty. Thanks to all of you — Friends of the Mississippi River members, donors volunteers and advocates — who have fueled this river renaissance.

Project by project, community by community, we are building momentum for a healthier, more vibrant metro Mississippi River. In 2015:

- A record 7,142 people helped restore habitat or learned about the river with FMR.
- Ecological restoration progressed on 21 sites totaling a record 1,014 acres.
- The upper St. Anthony Falls Lock was closed preventing invasive Asian carp from progressing upstream.

Now, as new river parks and projects emerge at a quickened pace, FMR is also working to ensure equitable access to river amenities for all, especially in North Minneapolis. We also remain dedicated to protecting the river’s health, advocating for innovative new policies to reduce the biggest threat to the river today, agricultural pollution.

While much work remains, we look forward to continuing to restore and enhance our world-class treasure — together, and stronger than ever.

Sincerely,

Forrest Flint
Chair, FMR Board of Directors

YOU!
ALL OF OUR
SUCCESS IN 2015 IS
BECAUSE OF YOU.

Healthy habitat.
Healthy wildlife.
Healthy river.
Healthy people.

Healthy communities.

Thank YOU!

A NEW FILM FROM FMR:

REBIRTH

THE MISSISSIPPI'S NATIONAL PARK

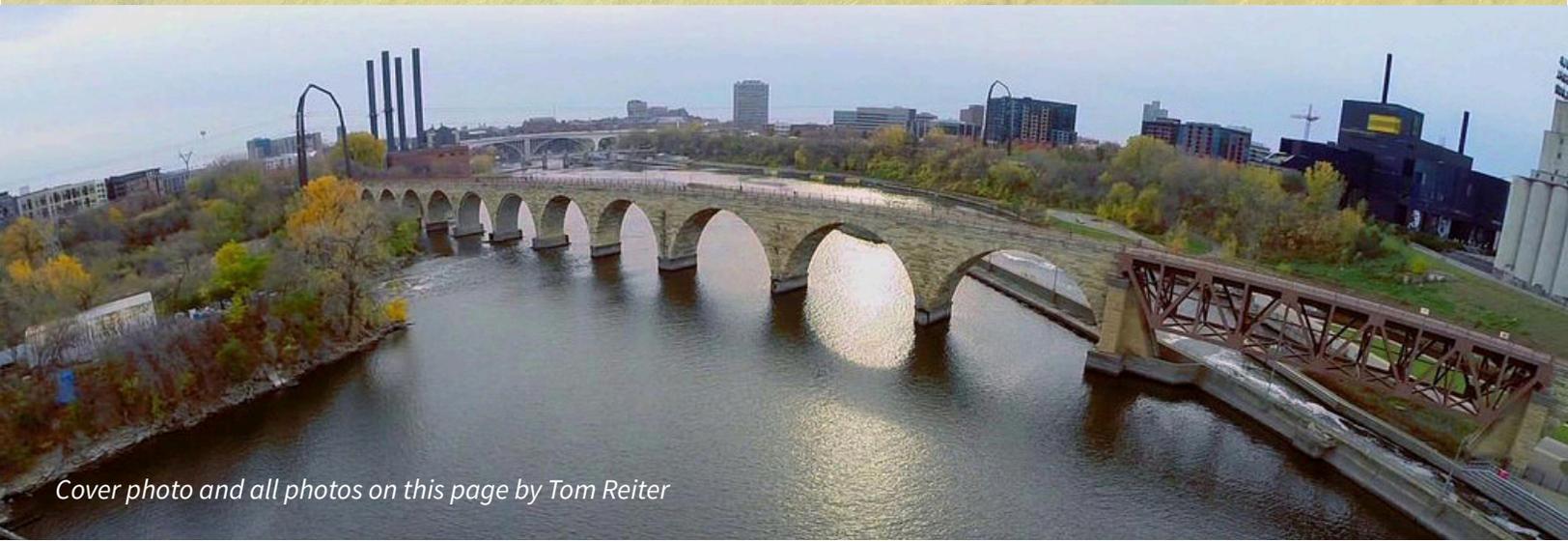


In 2015, FMR began work on the documentary “Rebirth: The Mississippi’s National Park.” Produced for FMR by award-winning local filmmakers John Kaul and Tom Reiter, and narrated by Minnesota Public Radio’s Steve Seel, this 30-minute documentary tells the story of how one man’s vision — combined with smart citizen advocacy and effective political leadership — created the Mississippi River’s first and only national park right here in the Twin Cities.

This designation, initiated locally by self-proclaimed “river rat” Tom Kelley and championed at the federal level by Sen. David Durenberger and Rep. Bruce Vento, sparked the local river renaissance we enjoy today — a river that is thriving with fish and bald eagles, a river increasingly connected to our communities via parks and trails, a river seen as an asset instead of a convenient dumping ground.

“Rebirth” premiered to a packed house at the Guthrie Theater and aired on Twin Cities Public Television in spring 2016. We look forward to getting the film into classrooms and libraries and continuing to spread this inspiring stewardship story throughout 2016.

See the film online or request a DVD for your group, school or library at FMR.org/rebirth.



Cover photo and all photos on this page by Tom Reiter

WATER

FMR's Water Program seeks to protect and enhance the Mississippi River's water quality. It's a simple goal, but one that requires a flexible, multi-level approach.

We work with citizens, communities and local governments to shape public policies at the local, state and even the national level. We maintain strong relationships with local and national water quality experts, helping us identify and focus on the key issues facing today's river. Thanks to robust partnerships and a growing base of FMR members and advocates, we can make an impact on essential education and policy efforts.

-2015 ACCOMPLISHMENTS-

BUILDING ALLIANCES FOR BUFFERS, BIOFUELS & BEYOND

Since 2010 FMR has coordinated the Minnesota Environmental Partnership's Water Cluster, a coalition of more than a dozen conservation organizations working to shape state and local water policy. Despite the challenging 2015 legislative session, the coalition had several key victories, including passage of Gov. Mark Dayton's buffer law that will improve water quality throughout the state. The coalition also secured the governor's veto of a bill that would have rolled back longstanding water protections and successfully advanced programs to address agricultural runoff pollution. (See "Advancing Biofuels.")



ADVANCING BIOFUELS WORKING LANDS, HEALTHY RIVER

For eight months of the year, many Minnesota farm fields sit barren, prone to erosion and runoff pollution. Deep-rooted perennial plants and cover crops significantly reduce these problems, but farmers have had little incentive to grow them. In 2015, FMR and our allies successfully worked with the state Legislature to incent advanced biofuel production companies to set up shop here. In spring 2016, we advanced the supply-side of the equation, creating the Working Lands Watershed Restoration Program to support farmers to grow these new perennial crops. FMR and our allies also successfully secured full funding for the U of M Forever Green Initiative to continue researching and developing crops that support both Minnesota's water quality and farm economy.

28

ACTION ALERTS
sent to citizens to help
support clean water

22

CITIES
now have water-friendly
stormwater practices



Photo by SuperVolunteer Rich Wahls

BREWING CLEAN WATER

PUTTING WATER QUALITY ON TAP

Our Brewing Clean Water program connected several local breweries with FMR's Water and Stewardship programs in 2015, hosting four water quality education events at three Twin Cities breweries. Participants learned how they could impact the health of the Mississippi River, both politically and personally.

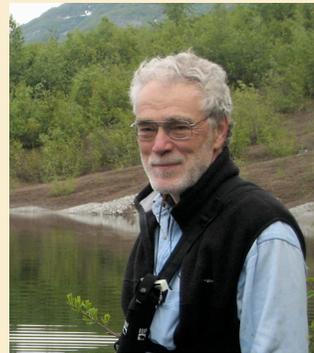
NEW BLUE STAR CITIES!

ENCOURAGING WATER-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES

Fridley, St. Anthony Park and Elk River earned their Blue Star Awards in 2015 and early 2016! FMR created the Blue Star Award Program to recognize cities that excel in stormwater management, and provide a forum for water managers to support one another in reducing runoff pollution. Learn more at Bluestarmn.org.

LOOKING AHEAD:

Seeking to answer the common question, "So how is the Mississippi River?", FMR partnered with the National Park Service to create the award-winning **State of the River Report** in 2012. Now we're hard at work on the updated version, due in late-September 2016. In addition to the popular policy and stewardship guides that accompany the report, the new version will also include a companion teacher's guide to help bring the report into the classroom. For updates visit FMR.org and sign up for our e-newsletter, "Mississippi Messages".



"FMR helps advance public understanding of water quality issues by translating complex scientific research into terms that policy makers and regular

Minnesotans can understand and act on."

— Dan Engstrom, Director of the St. Croix Watershed Research Station

RIVER CORRIDOR

In the 1970s, we lived near a different river. Pollution laws were lax and land-use guidance minimal. But as the nation began to change course, so did Minnesota. In 1976, the state designated the lands along the 72-mile metro-area stretch of the river as the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area and set up a program to guide development within it.

Since that time, this 72-mile stretch of the river has been designated a national park and many communities and developers have come to recognize its worth as both a cultural amenity and economic driver. However, as we move to embrace the river and capitalize on its exceptional value, we risk degrading or even destroying the very qualities we seek to enjoy.

Strong state standards and community-based advocacy for a healthy and vibrant River Corridor are now more important than ever. On a regional and state level we work to strengthen state Critical Area standards. Locally, we partner with residents and institutions to support river-positive development, helping people protect the river's unique cultural, scenic and natural features as our communities turn towards the Mighty Mississippi.

-2015 ACCOMPLISHMENTS-

RIVER ACCESS FOR ALL PROTECTING, RESTORING N/NE MINNEAPOLIS RIVERFRONT

FMR has long worked towards a greener vision of the industry-dominated Minneapolis riverfront north of St. Anthony Falls. Many FMR-advocated changes

came to this stretch in 2015, such as the closure of the downtown lock and increased public ownership of riverfront lands. These changes make it possible for new park and trail development to progress at a relatively rapid pace. To ensure that



North Minneapolis residents, long separated from the river by a wall of industry and Interstate 94, will be able to access new, local amenities, FMR began researching ways to overcome these barriers and ensure that equitable access is not relegated to the sidelines. In 2016, we are working with North residents and organizations to identify, prioritize and advocate for solutions that will improve their physical connections to the river. These include better pedestrian crossings, bike lanes, landscaping and wayfinding signage and maps.

FORTIFYING RIVER PROTECTORS GROWING OUR GRASSROOTS BASE

Founded to bring citizen voices to bear on decisions that affect the river, FMR has a long history of engaging both community groups and individuals to protect and restore the Big River. In 2015, we shored up this base and fortified our grassroots advocacy program. Significant investments were made in strategic planning, fundraising and communications infrastructure to allow us to better connect members and advocates with the issues that matter most to them and further sharpen the effectiveness of our policy work.

Lend your voice to the River Protectors program by getting involved in 2016 at FMR.org!





Photo by Jim Hudak

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES PROTECTING PUBLIC PROCESS, BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS

Widely supported community plans developed with public input are often deviated from or ignored when riverfront development proposals come forward. FMR is the go-to group for river corridor residents seeking assistance to influence decisions that impact the river and their neighborhood. In 2015, an oversized development was proposed for the bluff-top overlooking the Mississippi and Minnesota confluence in St. Paul. FMR worked with community partners to successfully convince the city council to rescale the project, and preserve iconic scenic river valley views and community character while making reasonable accommodations for the developer. FMR also worked with city planners and local citizens to move publicly supported plans forward to revitalize the North and Northeast Minneapolis riverfront, St. Paul’s West Side Flats and other riverfront locations.



“I love living in the heart of the city while being near water and wildlife. FMR is instrumental to protecting this rare combination and making it accessible to everyone. FMR advocacy helps everyone understand the issues that need to be addressed, and connect area activists like myself, other organizations and the legislature to make our visions a reality.”

— Carletta Sweet
Above the Falls Citizen Advocacy Committee member helping to guide the redevelopment of the Mississippi River north of St. Anthony Falls

LOOKING AHEAD:

In addition to growing the River Protectors program and collaborating with North Minneapolis communities, FMR staff will be working hard to support new **Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area** rules. Spurred by FMR advocacy efforts, these new rules will govern land-use throughout the Twin Cities river corridor and are likely to be put into place late in 2016. Visit FMR.org/advocate to become a River Protector and stay in touch.

LAND PROTECTION

From government agencies to families, FMR partners with landowners to protect, restore and enhance important natural areas throughout the metro-area Mississippi River watershed.

Many local landowners want to care for the health of their land and our waters, but need support and guidance through the complex protection and restoration process. FMR not only helps them understand their protection options — often resulting in new conservation, wildlife and park areas — but also oversees the planning and restoration of protected sites to return them to a state of ecological health.

Caring for both the land and the relationships that support it, FMR's approach is unique and highly successful. Since our founding, FMR has assisted in the protection of more than 2,200 acres; developed management plans for over 8,570 acres at 79 sites, and conducted restoration on over 1,476 acres at 53 sites.

-2015 ACCOMPLISHMENTS-

COMMUNITY-BASED CONSERVATION PROTECTING HABITAT TOGETHER

FMR ecologists help parks departments and landowners throughout the metro restore and enhance natural areas in our watershed. In 2015, we developed five natural resource management plans (NRMPs) representing 459 acres of future ecological restoration work. In addition to detailing what plants and animals live on each site and the steps necessary to protect them, NRMPs build a new, shared vision for each location, helping to create more natural areas in parks, converting former farmlands into prairies, and re-establishing native plants to create local pollinator and wildlife habitat.

53

SITES BEING RESTORED
to native prairie and woodlands

PRAIRIE & WOODLAND RESTORATION AND ENHANCEMENT

Working with professional crews and 297 volunteers, FMR restored or enhanced 1,014 acres at 21 sites. Activities ranged from installing over 60 acres of prairie to controlling invasive brush in woodlands. Public restoration sites include state Scientific & Natural Areas, such as Pine Bend Bluffs and Hastings Sand Coulee, as well as city and regional parks like Spring Lake in Nininger/Rosemount and Ole Olson in North Minneapolis, among many others. Restoration also advanced on privately owned woodlands and prairie with several Dakota County families and Flint Hills Resources, 3M and Northern Tier Energy.





Photo by Tom Reiter

Since FMR secured its protection as a state Scientific & Natural Area in 2002, Pine Bend Bluffs has been a perennial favorite amongst our habitat restoration volunteers.

FUTURE CONSERVATIONISTS

ENGAGING YOUTH IN RESTORATION RESEARCH

FMR ecologists work with teachers and schools near important restoration sites, developing long-term relationships that benefit both the natural area and the students' educational experience. At Hastings High School, FMR is working with biology teacher Joe Beattie and his students to help restore the nearby Vermillion Linear Park. Students planted 52 shrubs and 292 wildflowers and woodland sedges in fall 2015, helping to stabilize soil and provide ecological diversity. Another planting is set for fall 2016. Starting in 2017, students will experiment with prairie planting methods, investigating which lead to the best-established native wildflowers and potentially influencing future FMR restoration methodologies.

459
ACRES PLANNED
for future restoration

LOOKING AHEAD:

In 2016, FMR is helping to permanently protect the new **Hampton Woods Wildlife Management Area** in the heart of Dakota County. FMR ecologists are now developing plans to restore this oak forest. We're also leading the restoration of the **William H. Houlton Conservation Area** in Elk River, installing 160 acres of prairie at this 347-acre riverfront natural area that FMR helped permanently protect in 2014. Visit FMR.org and sign up for our e-newsletter, "Mississippi Messages," for updates.



"We've always wanted to protect the land that my great grandfather plowed up 150 years ago. It's always been a dream of mine to see prairie growing here once again. Now, thanks to the time, effort and guidance of FMR, it's protected forever and we have a 25-acre restored prairie."

— Carolyn Emrick
Dakota County landowner, Mississippi bluffland conservation partner
(Pictured with husband Dennis Emrick)

STEWARDSHIP

Many people care about the river, but how can we actively help restore and protect it? The FMR Outreach and Stewardship team organizes events and outings for people who want to restore important natural areas or make their homes or yards more river-friendly, for teachers who want to engage students in water quality issues, and for youth who want to educate local community members about water pollution.

All volunteer and education events benefit the river and are directly tied to our program areas. Hands-on volunteers work in special places being protected, restored and enhanced by FMR Land Conservation and River Corridor staff. Presentations and workshops educate individuals to reduce polluted runoff and embrace river-friendly practices.

In turn, volunteers and education participants are provided additional ways to stay involved in local river protection work. And with every rain barrel and native plant installed, we use our social influence to encourage more neighbors and communities to protect the river.

-2015 ACCOMPLISHMENTS-

CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH THE RIVER RECORD NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

FMR is proud to have engaged 7,142 participants in 210 river stewardship events in 2015. Through 72 presentations and workshops, 3,469 people learned to better connect their actions in their homes, yards and streets to the river. Another 3,671 people pitched in at 138 volunteer outings — marking storm drains, monitoring water quality, cleaning up litter and restoring habitat for our local wildlife and waters.

BREAKING GROUND NORTH MINNEAPOLIS

After years of advocating for the revitalization of the mostly industrial stretch of the Mississippi River, FMR officially established its first habitat restoration site in North Minneapolis: Ole Olson Park. Located near the Broadway Bridge on the western riverbank, the park is home to woodland terraces and grassland slopes. In 2015, FMR completed plans to restore an oak savanna to the upland riverbanks and river terraces, and worked with 26 volunteers in October to install over 1,940 showy native prairie plants along the bike trail, beautifying the park and providing pollinator habitat.

7,142
PEOPLE

learned about, restored,
cleaned up and helped
protect the river

1,765
YOUTH

engaged in outings and hands-
on river-service projects



Many thanks to all the young folks who work with FMR to educate our communities on the connection between our storm drains and water quality. “Keep ‘em Clean – Drains to River”!

EXPANDING YOUTH PROGRAMS SUPPORTING TOMORROW’S LEADERS

In 2015, FMR amped up its youth programs, both broadening our reach and deepening our relationships with more schools along the Mississippi River. FMR stewardship staff conducted 62 events and outings with 1,765 youth. We strengthened relationships with 13 schools and youth groups in special focus areas including the East Side of St. Paul, the Mississippi River Gorge in St. Paul and South Minneapolis, North and Northeast Minneapolis, and Hastings. With selected partners, we expanded the range and types of educational outdoor and classroom experiences we offer teachers and youth groups, fostering more meaningful relationships while connecting young people to the wonders of the Mississippi River.

“Thank you Friends of the Mississippi River for letting us help you paint. It was very fun and I would ♥ to do it again. Keep ‘em clean! Save the Mississippi! Don’t kill the little fishies!”

— Taleaha Wilson
storm-drain stenciling volunteer

LOOKING AHEAD:

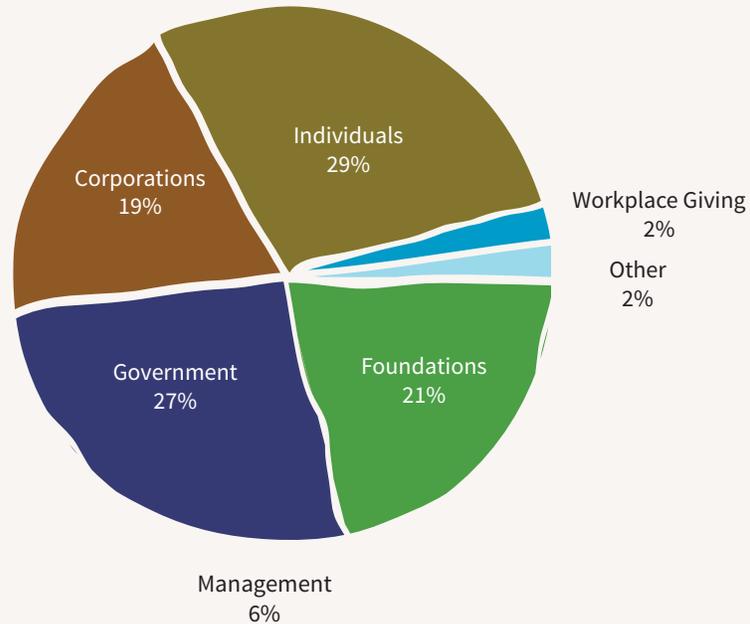
In 2016, FMR continues to expand its programs throughout the Twin Cities, including new locations in Inver Grove Heights and the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District in the southwest metro.

To find out about opportunities of interest to you, contact Volunteer Coordinator Amy Kilgore at akilgore@fmr.org or 651-222-2193 x31, or sign up for our e-newsletter, “Mississippi Messages,” at FMR.org to receive calendars of upcoming stewardship events.

FINANCIAL REPORT

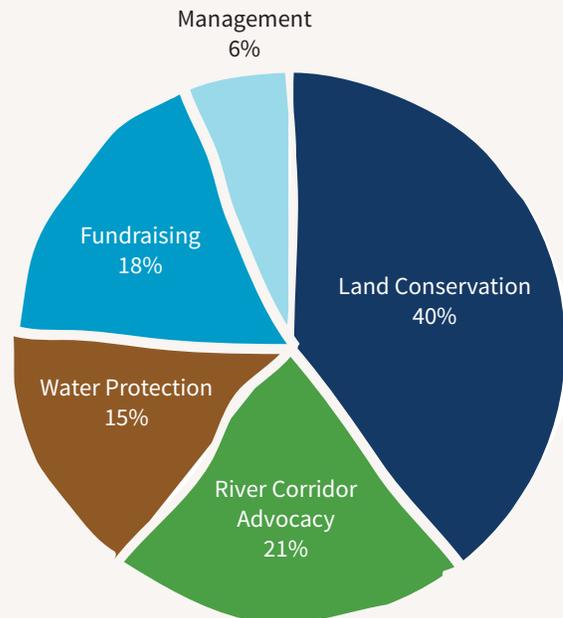
INCOME REPORT

Foundations	\$325,513
Government	416,426
Corporations	298,626
Individuals	440,470
Workplace Giving	33,082
Other	32,821
Total Revenue	\$1,546,938



EXPENSE REPORT

Programs	
Land Conservation	\$613,561
River Corridor	323,341
Water Protection	231,050
Fundraising	281,256
Management	94,059
Total Expenses	\$1,543,267



BALANCE SHEET

Assets		Liabilities & Net Assets	
Current Assets	\$1,539,829	Current Liabilities	\$75,087
Fixed & Other Assets	90,741	Net Assets	1,555,483
Total	\$1,630,570	Total	\$1,630,570

BOARD, STAFF & VOLUNTEERS

SuperVolunteers

Those volunteers who restored habitat at four or more hands-on events or otherwise contributed 20 hours or more of volunteer time.

Mary Adamski
Ali Ahmed
Amy Anderson
Gordon Andersson
John Anfinson
Gary Averbeck
Bob Bartlett
Joe Beattie
Fred Bertschinger
Michele Bevis
Barbara Bor
Ronnie Brooks
Jim Brozowski
Laurie Bruno
Ralph Butkowski
Edward Carroll
Maya Christensen
Stewart Crosby
Chadwick Dayton

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Patsy Huberty
Karen Jenkins
Elaine Jervis
Trystan Johnson
Courtney Jones

Lori Knosalla
Wayne LeBlanc
Cathi Lyman-Onkka
Katherine Majkrzak
Darrell Majkrzak
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Jim Stengel
Warren Stortroen
Annika Taylor
Carol Taylor
Kelsey Thurow
Robin Turner
Bill Turner
Janine Tysk
Walter Tysk
Rod Venterea
Susan Vento
Maggie Voth
Steve Wardell
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Ross Whitmore
Deanna Wiener
Kristin Willette
Susan Young
Tom Ziegler

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OUR DONORS

Friends of the Mississippi River extends our deepest thanks to everyone that made a contribution in 2015. You are our inspiration and the driving force that makes our work possible. Together, we're protecting, restoring and enhancing the Mississippi River for this and future generations. Please know that every gift you send is valued and directly benefits our mission, and we've worked hard to ensure the accuracy of this list of 2015 donors. If you identify errors or omissions, please let us know by contacting Sara at sdekok@fmr.org.

Mississippi Riverkeepers

Mississippi Riverkeepers is a special group of individuals and families who contribute annual gifts of \$1,000 or more to FMR. We're grateful for their leadership and investment in the protection of our treasured river and its watershed.

RIVER CONSERVER (\$20,000+)

Chad & Maggie Dayton
Peter & Mary Gove
Leuthold Family Foundation
W M Foundation
Helen C. Wilson*

RIVER DEFENDER (\$15,000 - \$19,999)

Goodale Family Foundation
Thomas J. Reiter & Sharon K. Miyamoto
Charitable Trust

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Ellen Butler & Harlen Hegdal
Judson Dayton & Shelley Mydra-Dayton
Karen Sternal & Lowell Pickett

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Tessa Gunther & Scott Hagg
Ruth & John Huss
Julia Kaemmer Fund of HRK Foundation
Ryan & Denise Mallery
Thomas Reiter & Sharon Miyamoto
Paul & Mary Reylets
SEBA Foundation
Kathy Stack

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Ronnie & Roger Brooks
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Charlton Dietz
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David Washburn & Meg Anderson
Cynthia Whiteford & David D. Nelson
Frank & Frances Wilkinson
Windsor Community Foundation

Mississippi River Legacy Society

Thank you to the following donors who have provided a future gift to FMR through their estate plans.

Whitney & Sarah Clark
Francine Corcoran
Peter & Mary Gove
Mary L. Hilfiker
Marjean Hoeft & Lisa Vecoli
Ardes M. Johnson
Patricia L. Koors
Dwight Malcom*
Kathy Stack
Helen C. Wilson*
Richard Zgodava*

'Rebirth' Funders

FMR is grateful to the following donors who provided support for the making of our documentary film, "Rebirth: The Mississippi's National Park."

MAJOR FUNDING PROVIDED BY

Bruce F. Vento Science Educator Scholarship
Fund of the Saint Paul Foundation
The Katherine B. Andersen Fund of The Saint
Paul Foundation
Thomas J. Reiter & Sharon K. Miyamoto
Charitable Trust

ADDITIONAL FUNDING PROVIDED BY

Ruth & John Huss
Mississippi National River and Recreation Area,
National Park Service
Friends of Bruce Vento
National Parks Conservation Association
Susan Vento
Wendy Bennett & Ken Powell
Bill & Judy Walter
Rick Pool/ Custom Sound & Video
Nancy Jacobson & Brad Bruette
Mississippi Park Connection

*In remembrance

Institutional Funders

A very special thank you to the institutions whose support sustains our work to protect and restore the Mississippi River.

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\$75,000+

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McKnight Foundation

\$25,000 - \$74,999

3M Corporation
Bruce F. Vento Science Educator Scholarship Fund of The Saint Paul Foundation
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Laura Jane Musser Fund
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W M Foundation

\$10,000 - \$24,999

3M Foundation
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MAHADH Fund of HRK Foundation
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REI
Winter Wheat Foundation
Xcel Energy Foundation

\$1,000 - \$9,999

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Custom Sound and Video
Great Lakes Brewing
H.B. Fuller Company Foundation
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The Longview Foundation
Medtronic Foundation
Nandale Family Foundation
The Nash Foundation
The National Environmental Education & Training Foundation
New Belgium Brewing
Nicholson Family Foundation
Northern Tier Energy
Patagonia, Inc.

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Rahr Corporation
River Network
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Seagate Technology
SEBA Foundation
Split Rock Coffee Company
Stone Pier Foundation
Symantec
UnitedHealth Group
Windsor Community Foundation
Xcel Energy

UNDER \$1,000

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Ameriprise Financial Employee Gift Matching Program
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Barr Engineering
Best Buy
Bremer Bank
Buck Hill, Inc.
Carolyn Foundation
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EcoTrust
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The Dante Moreira Gilbert Fund at the Renaissance Charitable Foundation
HRK Group, Inc.
IBM Corporation Matching Grants Program
Izzy's Ice Cream, LLC
The Lilja Family Foundation of The Saint Paul Foundation
Loop Holes Jewelry, LLC
Medtronic
Minnesota Native Landscapes
Mississippi Market Natural Foods Co-op
Mother Earth Gardens
Patagonia St. Paul
Piper Jaffray Employee Giving Program
PizzaRev-Edina
Spiral Natural Foods Cooperative
Thomson Reuters My Community Program
United Way of Goodhue, Wabasha & Pierce Counties
U.S. Bank
Vermillion State Bank
Walter C. Rasmussen - Northeast Bank Foundation
Wander North Distillery

GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

\$100,000+

Outdoor Heritage Fund

\$25,000 - \$99,000

City of St. Paul
Dakota County
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